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Footprints of Statesmen

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COLLEGII REGALIS B. MARIAE DE ETONA

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Footprints of Statesmen

DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

IN ENGLAND

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BY

REGINALD BALIOL BRETT

φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμδεν φρόνημα
καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο.

SOPH. *Antig.*

"He taught himself utterance and airy thought,
And heartstrains that sway the town."

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THE following pages do not profess to contain anything new, nor do they make an attempt to rise to the dignity of history.

They were written for the entertainment of a friend, in the hope that they might stimulate, not satisfy, curiosity.

They record some few impressions, which a long and fond contemplation of the eighteenth century, in relation to the days in which we live, has left on the mind of the writer.

25th August 1892.

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I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND

THE uses of history may not be immediately apparent to the mind of a youth accustomed to hear judgments delivered by older men upon the multitudinous topics of the day, altogether without reference to the past experiences of mankind. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, we live quickly and luxuriously. The saving of labour has been exalted into a science. For the convenience of the majority, thinking is done by deputy. Still in a rough way, jostling through life as he does, the ordinary man, taking his ideas and opinions from his morning newspaper, has some vague standard in his mind

by which he reckons the importance of current events and the value of current opinions. This standard is to a great extent fixed by his knowledge of what has happened to his countrymen in former times, and its accuracy is largely dependent upon the grasp he has obtained of the experiences of others in critical moments of English history. It is not to be supposed that history in relation to politics has attained to the dignity of a science. Politics, dependent as they are upon passion and caprice, are subject to the most unscientific variation. The art of politics, largely dependent on history, is in practice liable to unforeseen cataclysm, the result of infinite and sometimes subtle causes. But, nevertheless, no elementary comprehension of the art of ruling is possible without a knowledge of previous events, and without some care to unravel their causes and consequences.

The statesman whose business it is to rule; the citizen whose function it is to control and criticise the acts of his rulers; both are forced to turn for assistance

to the student who collects and tabulates the actions of men and the sequence of events. No less are they indebted to the dreamer, the artist in words, who draws inferences from facts, and who fills in the canvas with light and shadow, and places the personages and their deeds in proper perspective.

It would be an error to imagine, as the young often do, that the visions of the political dreamer are vain and fatuous. They give to the practical politician that guidance which the pillar of fire gave to the Israelites in their wanderings by night.

The functions, however, of the dreamer of political dreams, and those of the statesman should be kept distinct. The statesman has to do with matters within what is called the range of practical politics. Sometimes it is said that no politician is an accurate judge of range; because a few hours may bring into the fierce melée of practical politics matters which have lain concealed from practical eyes. If the frequent failures to foresee new combinations of circumstances emphasise the objection to an active poli-

tician's searching through dreamland for possibilities which may never occur, at the same time, political instinct of the useful kind is incomplete unless supplemented by the imaginative faculty. This faculty of imagination, so essential in the practice of the arts, is based very largely upon acquaintance with what has already been done in the domain in which its exercise is required. Without a conception of the wealth, the learning, the arts and culture of the Roman Empire, sunk in the slough of the Middle Ages, and without having realised that North Africa was once covered with great cities in a high degree of civilisation, it is difficult to imagine Western Europe, including England, again submerged in semi-barbarous darkness. Who can assert that what the barbaric forces of nature have once effected, they may not again effect?

To assume the impossibility of this, is to live in a fool's paradise. Where Goths and Saracens have trodden, their antitypes from the purlieus of great cities may yet find foothold. It is doubtless difficult for an Englishman standing on

the steps of the Exchange to conceive the total destruction of England as a State, and the annihilation of the great Empire governed by his countrymen; but when his thoughts turn to Babylon with its 48 miles of circumference, and to Carthage with its 700,000 inhabitants, the idea assumes a more tangible shape, and the decay of the world's mart in which he stands appears far less unreal to him than to a Roman of the Antonine era would have seemed a forecast of the Rome of Gregory the Sixth. A careful examination of the careers of great men suffices to convince us that when a hero or a statesman dies, it nearly always happens that his arc of usefulness is complete. The feelings naturally resent this doctrine, for a keen sense of personal loss blinds us to true results; but on maturer reflection, it is consoling to arrive at the conviction that death is rarely the precursor of an unfulfilled mission. What is true of the individual man, may be true of nations; although, just as a man is a poor critic of his own life's work, and consequently is wise always to assume himself in mid career, the

true patriot should regard his country's mission but half fulfilled, and not venture to relax his efforts in her service. A brave and healthy man clings to hope for himself, as well as for the race to which he belongs. In 1839 the Duke of Wellington, walking in the garden at Walmer, lamented the "decline of the British Empire." In point of fact the British Empire, as we know it half a century later, was then still in swaddling clothes. The territories of the East India Company, ruled at that time by Lord Ellenborough, are hardly recognisable in the Indian Empire of the Empress-Queen Victoria. Scind and the Punjab, Tanjore, Oudh, the two Burmahs, have all passed into British possession since that time. In that very year Aden became an English outpost. Two years later Hong-Kong passed away from Chinese dominion; and within fifty years, shipping to a greater amount of tonnage entered the British port of Hong-Kong than entered London in 1840. Victoria and Queensland, indeed Australia itself, came into existence after the first half of this century had passed away. "The

Dominion of Canada" is the work of Ministers of Queen Victoria. In southern and eastern Africa, upon foundations laid by English hands, the structure of a new dominion is rapidly rising; while over Egypt, a land coveted by her most ancient rival, England has quite within recent years established her sway. The Duke of Wellington's mistake was, however, excusable in him. Marlborough might have used similar language in the garden of Blenheim, after the fall of Godolphin and during the negotiations at Utrecht. Elderly men, even the ablest, are apt to misinterpret the bearing of every departure from the customs and conditions of their youth. An era of government by parliamentary majority, ushered in by the Peace of Utrecht, must to Marlborough have seemed incompatible with the maintenance of British authority in European councils. He could no more foresee the victorious campaign in the Peninsula under Wellington, and the final overthrow of French ambition at Waterloo, than the Duke of Wellington could realise that fifty years after the Reform Bill of 1832

the population of these islands would have doubled, and that the expansion of the English Empire would include continents hardly known to him by name.

If it is true that the progress of a nation depends largely upon the innate qualities of its people, the conditions of the external world must also be taken into account. The energies of a race receive from these conditions their bent. Mr. Pitt called England the temperate zone of Europe. This description has been truer at some periods than others. To use a different image, England since the reign of Elizabeth has been one of the main arteries of European life. Every beat of the heart of Europe has been felt in these islands, and the blood has coursed through them into the veins of English people scattered over the face of the world.

From time to time the nation's mood has changed. Supineness, vehemence, enterprise, and indifference succeeded one another by turns. King William found England inclined once more to "shrink into her narrow self" under the indolent and corrupt dynasty of the

Stuarts. He endeavoured to make her the "arbitress of Europe" and the "tutelary angel of the human race." Marlborough succeeded in giving effect to William's aspirations. The campaigns which opened with the victory of Blenheim, and closed with the carnage at Malplaquet, placed England at the head of that Great Alliance which had for its object the overthrow of the plans of Louis the Fourteenth.

For more than a hundred years the principles of King William's policy were destined to guide English statesmen. Resistance to the ambition of France became the watchword of English patriotism.

The great Chatham maintained the tradition, and his son lived long enough to boast that "England having saved herself by her exertions" would continue, as in truth she did, to "save Europe by her example."

These were the days of storm. They tested the fibre of the English people.

Throughout the sixteenth century, when the struggle for intellectual freedom raged fitfully in Western Europe,

the part played by England was not inconsiderable. The Tudor family, with the exception of Mary, favoured religious liberty, and showed marked hostility to the Church of Rome. Thanks to the vigour of her rulers, England was not subjected to the horrors of civil war. She made headway against external foes; and in 1588, under Elizabeth, her efforts culminated in the defeat of the Spanish Armada. This secured peace for a while. But after the death of Elizabeth, and after the irresolute and treacherous Stuarts had succeeded the Tudors on the throne, internal dissensions broke out afresh, inducing men to take sides, until the country was divided into two hostile camps. The quarrel, whatever it is represented to be, was in reality a continuance of the religious strife between those who were for authority in religion and those who were for religious independence. Monarchy gravitated towards the Church. Parliaments were Protestant. Henceforward the contest became more clearly defined. Monarchy and Catholicism against parliaments and the Protestant faith. The dictatorship

of Cromwell was an interlude. The strife was renewed from time to time, and the tide of success ebbed and flowed. Exactly one hundred years after the attempt of Philip of Spain to force the Roman dogma upon England had failed, William of Orange succeeded by the aid of a Protestant revolution in establishing the Protestant Church upon a firm basis. In 1688 the centenary of the defeat of the Armada was observed by Englishmen in suitable fashion. They drove James the Second, the last Catholic sovereign who reigned in England, across the seas. By taking refuge in France, James indicated unwittingly the transference of the struggle from England to the continent of Europe, from civil war between Englishmen to a European war in which England was to take the lead on one side and France on the other. There were intervals of truce. But the struggle was destined to be maintained for another century. And with curious coincidence 1788 proved to be the last year which beheld on the throne of France a successor to Louis the Fourteenth unshorn of the authority

of the Grand Monarch. In the following year, the labour of the great eighteenth century ended, and there came about that birth of mighty events, known as the French Revolution, which was destined to change the face of the world.

The part taken by England in the vast intellectual and political movements of the nineteenth century is so important that their origin is worth noting. In the last four years of Queen Anne's reign may be found the germs of the government of the British Empire in the later years of Queen Victoria. The fall of Marlborough represented the overthrow of personal government.

In subsequent times, the parliamentary majority, the majority of members of the House of Commons, was to govern the country. The favour of a sovereign was no longer to be the primary object of an ambitious politician's attention. Regard must in future be had to party organisation, and even to popular opinion. The ephemeral administration of Harley and Bolingbroke was the first attempt at government based on parliamentary management. Without the support of

the Queen, at this early stage, these Ministers could not have retained office. A few years only passed away, and Walpole proved that a Minister could, by means of parliamentary influence, constrain an unfriendly sovereign to accept him and his adherents as the King's servants; while in his fall he bore witness to the new force which had arisen in England from the ashes of the regal authority of the Stuarts. For in the plenitude of his power, Walpole fell before the unrepresented forces of the people and their parliamentary champion, the elder Pitt.

The machinery of party government had been already set moving under the guidance of Bolingbroke. The arts of the rhetorician were already appreciated. The wire-puller was already at work. Slowly the power of the press was growing in the hands of Swift and Bolingbroke on the one side, and Addison and Steele on the other.

A politician who desired to overthrow his rival, or a Minister who wished to trip up his colleague, had no longer mainly an eye to the whims of a sove-

reign, or a sovereign's favourite. Other forces had to be considered, and other powers had to be courted. Intrigue, corruption, flattery were still the instruments chiefly in use; but they were no longer directed to the throne. A new system of toadyism, a new method of flattery, a new type of courtier, came into existence suitable to the new Power which had arisen. For the rule of the King, that of a new sovereign had been substituted. Doubtless the weakness and vices of humanity are constant and predominant factors. To them it has ever been found simplest and easiest to appeal by those men who are ambitious of ruling. It began, however, to be noticed that these instruments were no longer supreme. Wisdom and virtue in public men were to command somewhat greater attention than heretofore. During the next half century a system of government was established in England which became the model of two hemispheres, and of one-half of civilised mankind.

This has mainly been the work of that political combination which goes by the name of the Liberal Party, and which

rose out of the ruins of the great Whig Party destroyed by the faults of Charles Fox and by the genius of Mr. Pitt.

If a young man of average abilities desires to know something of the growth of the institutions under which he lives to-day, and of the Empire in which his lot is cast, at what point should he take up the story?

Modern England begins with the reign of Queen Anne. If the soul of Bolingbroke were to revisit his old home at Ealing, and were to take up a copy of the *Times* newspaper, or a volume of *Lothair*, it might without superhuman effort bridge the valley which lies between the St. John of that time and the Disraeli of this. To Marlborough the campaigns of Moltke, though surprising, would not appear unreal. While the ranging imagination of Swift would feel no overwhelming astonishment at the inventions of Edison, or the satire of a weekly Society Journal.

It is not essential, although it may be desirable, that an ordinary English lad should know that England existed before Queen Anne ascended the throne.

Bacon, as a politician, stands as far removed from his countrymen at the end of the nineteenth century as Thomas à Beckett; and the methods and aims of Cromwell or William the Third are as foreign to ours as those of Julius Caesar or Alfred the Great.

It curiously happens that those customs and habits which are of chief interest to men at the present time originate in the reign of the last Queen who reigned in England before Victoria. Although Sunderland may have whispered the secret in the ear of William, yet Bolingbroke, Harley, and Walpole were the statesmen who, in point of fact, founded Government by Party, and invented the curious executive authority which we call the Cabinet.

To Swift and Addison the great ephemeral writers of to-day may look as the prototypes of their kind. While round Marlborough appeared to centre the struggle of eighteenth century Europe against the domination of France under Louis the Fourteenth, much as in the nineteenth century that self-same struggle

against Napoleon centred round Wellington.

Analogies such as these are unscientific perhaps, but they are suggestive, and more important to the practical utilities of life than much of what is called science. For the purposes of statesmanship, the useful historian is not the man of encyclopædic mind, who can array vast masses of facts in proper order and sequence, but he who is able to open a lattice in the closed door of the past and let a ray of light strike upon and illumine some problem or some character of to-day.

From the fall of the Coalition Government of Lord North and Mr. Fox, and the formation of Mr. Pitt's Administration, dates the rise of the Liberal party.

The writings of Burke, the doctrines of Adam Smith, the speeches of Mr. Pitt in favour of Electoral Reform, cover the whole ground of modern politics. Religious freedom, political freedom, liberty of the press, widening of the political franchise, infusion of new blood into the House of Lords, Free Trade, the improvement of Irish government, and resistance to foreign oppression, are

the planks of which Liberal platforms have been for a century constructed, since Mr. Canning handed on the tradition of his friend and leader.

In 1815, when the great war ended, Englishmen had at last leisure in which to face those problems of internal government all consideration of which had been, of necessity, suspended during the aggressive career of Napoleon.

From that moment the lists were arrayed in which the honest and hearty struggle for political honours has since been carried on.

As a preparation for the right understanding of the conditions of that conflict, an English youth should pause for a moment at the threshold, and by endeavouring to picture the England of Anne and of the Georges, prepare his mind for the vast conception of the Empire of Victoria.

II

THE END OF PERSONAL RULE

In order to appreciate the significance of the reign of Queen Anne, it is necessary to understand the influence of three men — Marlborough, Bolingbroke, and Swift.

When Queen Anne ascended the throne, the most notable Englishman was undoubtedly Marlborough.

King William, as he lay dying, had solemnly charged the Queen to take chief counsel with the man to whom he looked to carry on the struggle against the domination of France. As his health failed, William had begun to lean on Marlborough. His unerring judgment had disclosed to him the power of the man. To this fascinating military genius, whose moral delinquencies he well knew, he desired to bequeath

his mantle. Queen Anne was nothing loth. Marlborough and his wife were her personal friends. She eagerly accepted him as her Grand Vizier. To her he was soon to stand in the relation of a Bismarck and a Moltke. He was her Imperial Chancellor and her Lord General. And for ten years out of a reign extending over twelve years only, this man remained the most conspicuous and most powerful Englishman both within the Queen's dominions and on the continent of Europe.

In 1702, when King William died, Marlborough was no longer young. He was born on the 24th May 1650, and thus he was advanced in middle life before his great opportunity arrived. As a youth he won men's hearts, and women's too, by his personal beauty,—beauty possibly inherited from Elizabeth Villiers, sister to the graceful Buckingham. This, it may have been, which first drew to him, in spite of his doubtful reputation for loyalty and straightforward dealing, the attention of King William, who was ever susceptible to graces of the person.

The Churchills traded upon their personal attractions, and the relation in which his sister, Arabella, stood to the Duke of York, curiously resembled that which Marlborough himself occupied in the affections of Lady Castlemaine, the mistress of Charles the Second. Through the influence of his sister's friend, the Duke of York, he obtained a "pair of colours," and he was indebted to his own friend, Lady Castlemaine, for the means which enabled him to maintain his military rank.

"Struck by his beautiful figure and captivating manners," Lord Chesterfield tells us, "she gave him five thousand pounds, with which he bought an annuity for his life of five hundred a year, of my grandfather Halifax, which was the foundation of his subsequent fortune."

It was a curious stepping on to the threshold of life, recalling rather the later days of Imperial Rome than our own country within ten years of the austerities of the great Protectorate. Whatever view may be taken of its moral aspect, it is a fact that to his

sister's personal charms and to his own, Marlborough's early advancement was due. What wonder that the morals of the lad were loose, and that manhood should have brought with it no abnormal gifts of high principle. Besides personal beauty, young Churchill possessed another attribute which has often proved irresistible. He had a perfect manner. His smile disarmed anger. He never argued or contradicted. "He caressed all men," said Burnet, "with a soft and obliging deportment." In moments of extreme diplomatic difficulty his courtesy and high breeding took the place of finesse. He mollified one potentate by handing him a napkin. He won the heart of another, Charles the Twelfth, by the tact he showed when by an awkward accident he was brought face to face in the King's closet with Stanislaus Leczinsky, whom Charles had placed on the throne of Poland, but who was not acknowledged as sovereign by England. "The Duke," it is recorded, "paid his respects to Stanislaus without compromising the dignity of his own

Sovereign; and the countenance and manners of Charles showed the gratification which he derived from this proof of attention."

To Charles the Twelfth, to Frederick the Great, to Augustus the Strong, to Stanislaus, he was personally known. By all of them he was personally liked. He himself exhibited no preferences. Fearing conflicting personal ambitions, he maintained a severe and courteous complacency. Yet, if he showed no preference, he was not above feeling that human weakness; for we have, in his own words, the remark when writing of these four sovereigns, that if he had to "make a choice it would be the youngest, the King of Sweden."

His command over his temper was absolute. Nothing could ruffle him. A story is told of him that when at the Hague he was riding with Commissary Maniot, and it having begun to rain, and Maniot's cloak having been at once put on by his servant, the Duke called for his. With a clumsiness not perhaps unusual, but none the less trying, the attendant puzzled about the

straps and buckles until the Duke called again and again, but without result other than a grumbling observation from the servant that "You must stay if it rains cats and dogs till I can get at it"; the Duke only turned to Maniot, and said, smiling, "I would not be of that man's temper for all the world."

If this was no very high trial, it must be remembered that occasions for loss of temper were not wanting to the husband of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Devoted as he was to her, he was not spared the trial of her vehement disposition and moods of irrational violence. Among her many charms, her long and beautiful hair had always captivated him. After some difference of opinion, on one occasion wishing to annoy him, unable to ruffle his equable demeanour, she conceived the idea of cutting off her superb locks, and placing them on a table in his ante-chamber. Even this would not induce him to abandon his annoying pose of perfect equanimity. To her infinite chagrin he passed and repassed them, apparently without notice. "He seemed," we are told, "neither angry

nor sorrowful," but unconscious both of his crime and his punishment. "Concluding he must have overlooked the hair, she ran to secure it. Lo! it had vanished." The Duke never alluded to it, and nothing ever transpired upon the subject till after his death, when she found her beautiful ringlets laid by in a cabinet, where he kept whatever he held most precious.

His self-command was enough to try the patience of a saint; and Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was never in danger of canonisation. In point of fact, if his temper was suave, if he was languid, if he was what in recent years has been called "ladylike" in his manner to men, if in speech with him it was noticed that he was gentle and always ready to do good offices; yet underneath this soft exterior was concealed a spirit of cast-steel. To his officers and soldiers this fact was well known. Although at fifty-two he was still the languid and courtly gentleman of the court of James, yet at Blenheim, in the press of battle, his demeanour was faultless, his temper serene, and his courage

the admiration of the army. The previous night he passed in prayer, after the manner of Cromwell or Ireton, and towards morning he took the Sacrament. Then he saw Prince Eugene, arranged the final details of the battle, and made plans for the succour of his wounded. He exposed his life so recklessly that when the story of Blenheim was known in England he received remonstrances from the Queen and from his friends for having "exposed his precious life," and for having "condescended to take his share as a common soldier." To these he made no answer. But to his wife he wrote:—

"My dearest Soul—I love you so well, and have set my heart so entirely on ending my days with you in quiet, that you may be so far at ease as to be assured that I never venture myself but when I think the service of my Queen and country requires it. Besides I am now at an age when I find no heat in my blood that gives me temptation to expose myself out of vanity; but as I would deserve and keep the kindness of

the army, I must let them see that when I expose them, I would not exempt myself."

He was not cured, and his cool courage was again at Ramillies the fear and admiration of his troops. Like every great commander, Marlborough was minutely careful of the health and comfort of his men. Although after Malplaquet one of the accusations pressed by his political foes was his reckless disregard of the lives of his men, in reality he never wasted his forces. He could sacrifice an army for the sake of victory, as the Germans did at Gravelotte; but his forethought on the eve of battle and his humanity afterwards were never called in question.

In council, in negotiation, although the difficulties which beset him were stupendous, his success was remarkable. He conquered often by the simple artifice of appearing to surrender. Against a plenipotentiary so pleasantly indifferent, it seemed hardly worth while to stand stiffly. Voltaire wrote of him that he was equally qualified for the field and

the cabinet; and did as much mischief to France by the wisdom of his head as by the force of his arm. The disputes between his wife and the Queen of which he bore the brunt, and to which ultimately he was sacrificed, inured him to quarrels and to bitter differences of opinion.

To the Duchess he wrote after a quarrel with the Queen of unusual violence: "It has always been my observation in disputes, especially in that of kindness and friendship, that all reproaches, though ever so reasonable, do serve to no other end but making the breach wider." The prudent self-control that marked his conduct in small things never deserted him in great affairs. His calm wisdom guided him through the perilous quarrels of the "Grand Alliance," and placed him at the head of the great confederation against the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth. At such a time, amid such a galaxy of brilliant rulers and commanders, with Frederick of Prussia, Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, Peter the Great, Prince Eugene, all of them rivals and contemporaries, Marlborough not only held his own, but in the eyes of his

friends, and by the admission of his foes, held the first place. His ascendency was never asserted with vulgar persistence, and for that reason was accepted by the princes and commanders who were his allies. His tact was only equalled by his good luck. No one with a spark of ambition, except a spoilt child of fortune, would have written: "Believe me, nothing is worth rowing for against wind and tide; at least you will think so when you come to my age." His star was constantly in the ascendant. On the continent of Europe his good fortune never forsook him. The god of battles was ever on his side. One after another he won great victories. If he besieged a town, the siege was never known to be raised. Even though, as at Malplaquet, he lost an army, he never lost a battle. And when finally he fell a victim to intrigues in England, in Europe France was at his mercy.

Although men liked Marlborough and respected him, it does not appear that he inspired or felt ardent friendship. Prince Eugene's feeling for him of regard and respect was the nearest approach to

sentiment that Marlborough inspired. After his fall, when Prince Eugene came to London and it was insinuated by Drummond, a creature of Bolingbroke's, that it would be well to ignore the Duke, Prince Eugene was angry and mortified, and declared very haughtily that he was not come to England to give disturbance to the Ministry, but it was inconsistent with his honour and temper to be wanting in respect to a friend in his adverse fortune for whom he had always professed so much regard in the time of his prosperity. Unlike Napoleon, but like Wellington, Marlborough inspired no deep enthusiasm. His adversaries, however, were always treated by him with respect, which they fully reciprocated. To Villars, when opposed to him, he sent occasional presents of wine and game. On one occasion, with mediæval politeness, he apologised to him for not offering him battle. Vendôme, the great grandson of Henry the Fourth, and Gabrielle d'Estrées, who had much of his father's pleasure-loving nature and warlike gallantry, always spoke admiringly of Marlborough.

Among the interesting personages who fought under his command were the Electoral Prince of Hanover, afterwards George the Second, who fought well at Oudenarde, and Maurice (afterwards Marshal Saxe), the young son of Augustus King of Poland, who although only twelve years of age, had secretly left Dresden, on foot, in order to be present with Marlborough at the siege of Lille.

His domestic life was intermittent; but what is known of it shows Marlborough at his best. Absence in numerous campaigns may perhaps have facilitated his relations with the Duchess; but there is no reason to suppose that his often expressed regret that she was not always at his side was other than genuine. His wife was the idol of his life, if we may judge from his letters.

At Blenheim, as the battle closed, still on horseback, amid the smoke of cannon still firing, it was to her that he wrote the first message of victory. He took from his pocket a tavern bill of expenses, and with a black lead-pencil wrote on the back :—

"*August* 13, 1704.

"I have not time to say more, but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory. M. Tallard and two other generals are in my coach, and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-camp, Colonel Parker, will give her an account of what passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another more large. MARLBOROUGH."

In 1702, when leaving for the Continent, he wrote to the Duchess:—

"It is impossible to express with what a heavy heart I parted with you when I was at the water's side. I could have given my life to have come back, though I knew my own weakness so much that I durst not; for I knew I should expose myself to the company. I did for a great while, with a perspective glass, look upon the cliffs, in hopes I might have one sight of you."

And from the Hague he declares:—

"I do assure you, upon my soul, I had much rather the whole world should

go wrong, than you should be uneasy; for the quiet of my life depends upon your kindness, and I beg you to believe that you are dearer to me than all things in the world. My temper may make you and myself sometimes uneasy; but when I am alone, and I find you kind, if you knew the true quiet I have in mind, you would then be convinced of my being entirely yours, and that it is in no other power in this world to make me happy but yourself."

These, it is worth noticing, are not the letters of a bridegroom, but were written twenty years after his marriage with the beautiful Sarah Jennings. Burnet described her as a woman of little knowledge, but of clear apprehension and true judgment, a warm and hearty friend, violent and sudden in her resolutions and impetuous in her way of speaking. She had an ascendant over the Queen in everything. "She was thought proud and insolent on her favour, though she used none of the common arts of a court to maintain it. For she did not beset the Princess, nor

flatter her. She staid much at home, and looked very carefully after the education of her children."

Her ascendency over her husband's heart was as complete as over the Queen's. After the death at Cambridge, in 1703, of their only son, Lord Churchill, whose monument is in the noble chapel at King's College, Marlborough writes:—

"I received this morning two of your dear letters, which I read with all the pleasure imaginable. They were so very kind, that, if it be possible, you are dearer to me ten thousand times than ever you were. I am so entirely yours, that if I might have all the world given me, I could not be happy but in your love." Of his boy he says: "Since it has pleased God to take him I do wish from my soul I could think less of him."

As from Blenheim, the earliest of his great battles, so from Malplaquet, the latest of them, his first despatch was to the woman round whom crystallised his strongest affections:—

"I am so tired that I have but strength

enough to tell you that we have had this day a very bloody battle; the first part of the day we beat their foot, and afterwards their horse. God Almighty be praised, it is now in our power to have what peace we please, and I am pretty well assured of never being in another battle; but that now nothing else in this world can make me happy if you are not kind."

"To the coolest head," said King William, "he united the warmest heart"; and the eulogy does not appear misplaced. Nothing could have been cooler and wiser than his advice to the Duchess when the troubles with the Queen arose. If his wife had possessed the self-restraint, under provocation, of Marlborough, the intrigues of Mrs. Masham and Harley would have had little success. "He knew the arts of living in a court," said Burnet, "beyond any man in it."

And there is no art of primer necessity than to ignore the provocations and jealousies of courtiers.

The same observer noted in him that "although without literature, he had a

solid and clear understanding, with a constant presence of mind." It was not so with the Duchess, whose presence of mind invariably forsook her under the influence of temper. She scolded the Queen like a naughty child, and the Queen wearied of her.

Marlborough could remonstrate with the Queen, but never on personal grounds. When he saw her, as he thought, treating her Whig Ministers in what would now be considered a thoroughly unconstitutional manner, by secretly intriguing with their political opponents, he wrote to her: "And as you desire that I would speak freely, I do protest in the presence of God Almighty that I am persuaded that if you continue in the mind that I think you now are, and will not suffer those that have the honour to serve you to manage your affairs agreeably to the circumstances of the times, your business must inevitably run into confusion, and consequently make it impossible for my Lord Treasurer to serve; for if he is thought to have the power, when he has not, both parties will be angry with

him, though both would admire him and be his friends if he were out of the service."

This passage is not only interesting as an indication of Marlborough's relations with the Queen; but it is also curious as an example of the form adopted in communications between "one of the Queen's servants" and the Sovereign, so different from the curious mingling of the third person and the second person now in vogue.[1] Finally it is the first recorded suggestion of "ministerial responsibility" as now understood; a conception then in swaddling clothes, but destined to grow rapidly in the years that followed.

Marlborough saw little of his children, but he was tenderly attached to them. One of his daughters married the son of his friend and colleague the Treasurer Godolphin, without whose financial skill his campaigns would have been impossible. Another married Sunderland. It was through the latter that his titles and possessions were ultimately to

[1] In writing to the Queen, the Prime Minister would use the following form :—"Mr. Gladstone presents his humble duty to Your Majesty, and begs to inform Your Majesty that he," etc. etc.

descend. The later days of his life were spent at Blenheim, at Holloway near St. Albans, and at Windsor Lodge, of which Park the Duchess was the Ranger.

It was at Windsor that he died. He was always fond of, and he continued to the end of his life to enjoy, the company of his friends. His constant amusement was to play ombre and commerce with his grandchildren. But his favourite game was whist.

The manor of Woodstock—since made famous by Sir Walter Scott's romance to thousands who have never connected it with Blenheim Castle and the Duke of Marlborough—had been presented to him after his great victory over the French. The Castle of Blenheim was commenced in 1705, and although the Queen intended to finish it, the building took so long a time, that when it approached completion Marlborough was out of favour, and he had to pay the final instalments himself. He has been charged with avarice. It is certain, that notwithstanding his expenditure, which was necessarily great from the state he was forced to maintain when abroad, his

emoluments and those of his wife enabled him to acquire vast riches. He was overwhelmed with gifts. Pictures from the Netherlands, precious stones, silver plate, gold memorials of all kinds were showered upon him. He was careful and unwasteful. His wealth accumulated. So much so, that at his death his private income was said to have been £70,000 a year; and when the Duchess of Marlborough died—and she survived her husband twenty-two years—her fortune was reckoned at three millions sterling: a huge sum in those days to have been the property of a private person.

A monument at Blenheim, near Woodstock, is inscribed with a record of Marlborough's achievements.

The Castle of Blenheim was founded by Queen Anne,
in the fourth year of her reign,
in the year of the Christian era, 1705.
A monument designed to perpetuate the memory of the
Signal Victory,
obtained over the French and Bavarians
near the village of Blenheim,
on the banks of the Danube,
by John Duke of Marlborough.
The hero not only of his Nation, but his age;
Whose glory was equal in Council and in the field,
Who by Wisdom, Justice, Candour and Address
reconciled various and even opposite Interests
acquired an Influence, which no rank, no authority, can give

nor any force but that of superior virtue.
Became the fixed important Centre
which united in one Common Cause
the principal States of Europe
Who by military knowledge and irresistible valour
in a long series of uninterrupted triumphs
broke the Power of France,
when raised the highest, when exerted the most;
rescued the Empire from Desolation;
asserted and confirmed the Liberties of Europe.

These words form the preamble of a long historical survey of the achievements of Marlborough. A student anxious to master the facts of Queen Anne's reign might do worse than make the attempt to justify, or criticise, this panegyric by reference to authorities. The conclusion, however, is irresistible, that King William's insight was remarkably accurate, and that Marlborough was the one competent and effective man in Europe able to compete with and possibly to vanquish Louis the Fourteenth. A Captain General, who could keep England at the head of the European confederacy, was required. He was the man for the place. At the end of the seventeenth, as at the end of the eighteenth century, the "Liberties of Europe" required "asserting" and "confirming."

In the one case the work conceived and only half accomplished, under unlucky auspices, by Mr. Pitt, was gloriously concluded by Wellington. In the former instance King William was the architect to plan the structure of European freedom consolidated later by the victories of Marlborough. In both cases, the French people under Louis the Fourteenth, and subsequently under Napoleon, were the aggressors, aiming at dominion. In both cases Europe was saved by the example and efforts of England.

The recuperative energy and aggressive ambition of France are remarkable and constant factors in modern European history. It is curious to note the recurring combinations between France and Spain—a combination so fatal to France—which brought about the wars of the Spanish succession culminating in the victories of Marlborough; the Peninsular War which led to the humiliating abdication at Fontainebleau; and the Spanish intrigues of General Prim which preceded the disaster at Sedan. Of these perhaps the most dangerous to Europe was the desire of Louis the

Fourteenth to consolidate France and Spain under a Bourbon king. The defeat of this scheme was, as far as any one man can claim the credit of it, due to him whom Turenne in early days had called "the handsome Englishman"; who was to live to utilise the lessons learnt in the service of that great commander against the armies of France. Marlborough's faults were exposed during his lifetime. They were exaggerated in the bitter invective of Swift. Judged by the standard of his day, they are venial. Unlike his virtues, they are of no interest or advantage when contemplated at a distance of time. Bolingbroke, his deadliest foe, said of him: "He was so great a man that I have forgotten his vices." And if Bolingbroke could forget them, they may well be left in obscurity.

Such was the man whose name stands last upon the long list of personal rulers of England. His power was not so great as Wolsey's, but it eclipsed that of any commander, ecclesiastic, or statesman who succeeded him. With him fell personal rule, and thenceforth a new executive

authority was to take the place of the King's Minister, and of the King himself.

The Cabinet of Harley which succeeded to Marlborough's authority had not the unquestioned power of the Cabinet of Lord Beaconsfield. But the principle of that authority was recognised by Parliament, by the more thoughtful writers, and by the Sovereign herself. Furthermore, it is now clear to us that its foundations were then well and truly laid, and that within a very few years the novel structure was to assume visible and tangible shape.

III

THE AUTHORS OF PARTY GOVERNMENT

ROUND the fall of Marlborough has gathered the interest attaching to the earliest political crisis at all resembling those of quite recent times.

It is at this moment that Party Government in the modern sense actually commenced. William the Third with military instinct had always been reluctant to govern by means of a party. Bound as he was, closely, to the Whigs, he employed Tory Ministers. He disliked extreme men; Lord Wharton, for example, whom for the confusion of historians Burnet thought the completest gentleman in England, and whom Swift called the most universal villain he ever knew. Ministries under King William

were not harmonious. The new idea of a homogeneous government was working itself into shape under the mild direction of Lord Somers; but the form finally taken under Sir Robert Walpole, which has continued to the present time, was as yet some way off. Marlborough's notions were those of the late King. Both abroad and at home he carried out the policy of William. He refused to rely wholly upon the Whigs, and the extreme Tories were not given employment. The Ministry of Godolphin was a composite administration, containing at one time, in 1705, Tories like Harley and St. John as well as Whigs such as Sunderland and Halifax. In the passage of that great act of domestic policy, the Union with Scotland, Lord Somers, who was described by Sunderland as the soul of the Whig party, and who certainly was its leader, although not in office, was employed by the Government, to whom according to modern notions he could not have been a *persona grata*, to conduct the deliberations of the Commission which settled the terms of the Bill. This proposal for an Act of Union was

one of the last measures laid by King William before Parliament. It had been sanctioned and initiated by him in the few days which elapsed between his fall from horseback on 21st February and his death on the 8th of March 1702; but it was not until 1707 that a final settlement of the many difficulties was arrived at under the guidance of Lord Somers, and the Act of Union was placed among the Statutes of the realm.

Lord Somers was a type of statesman of a novel order at that time, but not so strange to us who can look back upon a list of Chancellors including Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Eldon; Lord Brougham and Lord Cairns. In the beginning of the eighteenth century it was rare to find a man attaining the highest political rank who was unconnected by birth or training or marriage with any of the great "governing families," as they have been called. Lord Somers was the son of a Worcester attorney. He was born in the same year as Marlborough, 1650, and at the age of forty-seven he became, from Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Keeper

of the Conscience of William the Third, and Chancellor.

He is said to have maintained to the end of his life a severe and lofty character, neither arrogant to his inferiors nor servile to the Sovereign. Even Swift was obliged to admit that he possessed all excellent qualifications except that of being a Tory. Lord Somers was a man of violent passions, but they were under admirable control. Burnet thought his fairness and gentleness almost amounted to a fault. Historians have gathered from contemporary authorities the opinion that in our history no more upright or unsullied character can be found. It was fortunate for England that Lord Somers should have been the foremost man of the Whig party at the time when constitutional government, as we now call it, was in course of construction. By his prudent counsel the Whigs were guided through the difficult years at the end of Queen Anne's reign; and from the ordeal of seeing their rivals in power they certainly managed, as a party, to emerge on the whole with credit.

Although he was not nominally their leader, the paramount influence in the Tory party was Bolingbroke's; and that the Tories suffered from the defects of his great qualities, no unprejudiced critic can doubt.

Between the two parties, and at the head of the Treasury through the earlier years of the reign, stood Godolphin, without whose masterly knowledge of finance and careful attention to the details of administration Marlborough's policy would have been baffled and his campaigns remained unfought. To Godolphin, more than to any other one man, is due the preponderance of the Treasury control in public affairs.

It was his administration, during the absence of Marlborough on the Continent, which created for the office of Lord Treasurer its paramount importance, and paved the way for Sir Robert Walpole's government of England under the title of First Lord of the Treasury—an office destined to become synonymous with that which is called by courtesy Prime Minister.

After the accession of George I. and

the fall of Bolingbroke, the office of Lord Treasurer was not revived; but later, although the nomenclature differed, the power of First Minister became again associated with the command of the Treasury; and it is only recently, under the second administration of Lord Salisbury, that the office of First Lord of the Treasury, by becoming associated with the leader of the House of Commons and not with the head of the Government, has ceased to be synonymous with that of First Minister of the Crown.

Godolphin's personal appearance was not in his favour. He was, not unappropriately, called Baconface. His manners were cold and haughty, even to the Queen. And yet his pride, which was great, could not preserve him from countenancing the unwise prosecution of Dr. Sacheverell, and from indulging his personal resentment against this uninteresting divine, who had in a public discourse applied to him an offensive epithet.

He was a passionate man, and, unlike Marlborough, his passions were not under complete control. On his dismissal, the

Queen refused to see him, and, prompted it was thought by Lady Masham, who hoped for some exhibition of the sort, requested him to break his staff of office instead of handing it back to her. This he did with a contemptuous gesture of anger, flinging the pieces into the fire—an act immediately reported to Queen Anne, and serving further to incense her against him. He was closely allied to Marlborough by the marriage of his son with the Duke's eldest daughter, and the heiress to his titles and estates, which however she was not destined to transmit to posterity. Godolphin's financial management was remarkable. At the accession of Queen Anne the National Debt amounted to £16,000,000, upon which £1,300,000 was paid by way of interest. At the end of the war it amounted to £52,000,000, upon which £3,300,000 interest was paid. This was a remarkable proof of financial capacity on the part of the Minister, who was responsible — not for the expenditure, which was altogether beyond his control, but for the credit of the country. The loans were raised with singularly little

difficulty and friction. Writing on 24th September 1706, Godolphin says that England could borrow money easily at four or five per cent. Whereas in France, money could only be obtained with difficulty at rates varying between twenty and twenty-five per cent.

To a very large extent this was due to his prudent administration of the Treasury. No doubt the taxable area was wider in England. There were no privileged classes exempt from taxation, as in France. The nobility in England were as liable as the untitled gentry to pay taxes imposed by Parliament. The clergy since 1665 had ceased to be privileged. By a little-noticed agreement in that year, between Archbishop Sheldon and Lord Clarendon, without an Act of Parliament, the sacerdotal privilege of exemption had been abandoned. As England was more resourceful, so the task of Godolphin was doubtless easier than that of Louis the Fourteenth; but notwithstanding this advantage, Marlborough saw and always admitted that his victories were due in large measure to the financial skill of Godolphin. To this statesman's

lasting credit it must be remembered that in a venal age, when the standards of public honesty were so different from those which now prevail, Godolphin died a poor man. Two generations were to pass away before Mr. Pitt, by an example of pure and lofty disinterestedness, was to set a fashion of personal scrupulousness, which has since passed into the code of public morals. Godolphin, in this respect, was in advance of his age.

Bolingbroke, on the other hand, was the offspring of his generation, the child of the latter end of the seventeenth century. As the ultimate expression of a party, whose doctrines were those of legitimacy for the throne and of faith in the Christian religion, Bolingbroke, the sceptic in everything and believer in nothing, was as great a paradox as, a century later, was Robespierre, the incarnation of a sanguinary Terror, with his sentimental humanity and his aversion to blood.

Bolingbroke represented to Englishmen in England those forces against which the majority of the nation had revolted in 1688. Even when he became

the servant of Queen Anne and took office with Harley, even after the disgrace of Harley, when he momentarily became the head of the Administration, he was always a Jacobite. To be a Jacobite was not simply to be for King James. It was to be a supporter of Louis the Fourteenth in Europe and an opponent of the Grand Alliance. It was to be for monarchical and Catholic Europe, and against parliamentary and Protestant Europe. The success of the Jacobites meant the reversal in Europe as well as in England of the policy of William the Third.

It is therefore hard to understand the motives which prompted so shrewd a man as Bolingbroke to remain a Jacobite. He seems to have been, all his life, the slave of the spirit of contradiction. Unquestionably around him living, and about him dead, controversy has raged. His character, his motives, his actions, and his professed principles, have all formed the subject of differences of opinion between scholars and politicians. Like Alcibiades, whose extravagances he was inclined to emulate, he loved

notoriety. He is not known to have cut off the tail of a matchless hound; but it was remembered of him that in the hey-day of his youth he ran through St. James's Park naked.

His earliest days were spent among all the dreary surroundings of Dissent, in times when the Nonconformist conscience was perhaps at its dreariest. No wonder that the freedom of Eton, and its extension at Oxford, produced violent reaction. Dr. Manton's one hundred and nineteen sermons on the 119th Psalm, on which his young mind was fed, did not prevent him while still a boy from engaging as his mistress Miss Gumley, the most notorious and expensive courtesan about town.

Bolingbroke is specially interesting to us as the first English statesman whose political characteristics appear modern. His oratorical powers, his party spirit, his idea of utilising the press, his literary manner, though possibly not his style, suggest a politician who might be a contemporary of Lord Beaconsfield.

His start in life under the auspices of

Marlborough, his combination of forces with Harley, his severance from the Whig party, his unscrupulous opposition, all fit him for a place among nineteenth century politicians. His acceptance of office under Harley, his intrigues to overturn him, his momentarily-obtained and for-ever-lost leadership, almost entitle him to rank as member for some great metropolitan constituency, instead of a pocket borough long since swept away.

To his contemporaries he was a figure full of interest. No man can fail to be interesting whose passions are violent and unrestrained. Passions, he once said, are the gales of life. And certain it is that they wafted him hither and thither at will. He seems to have made no successful attempt to beat up against them. Lord Chesterfield deplored his wasted energies, as a mortifying example of the violence of human passions and the weakness of the most exalted human reason. At Eton the contrast between St. John and Robert Walpole was noticed, and was sustained with curious accuracy through life. The one, licentious, gay, negligent, idle,

endowed with marvellous memory and quickness of apprehension; the other industrious, sober, diligent, steady, and solid. Swift, writing intimately to Stella in 1711, described Mr. St. John as the greatest young man he ever knew, "wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of apprehension, good bearing and an excellent taste; the best orator in the House of Commons, admirable conversation, good nature, good manners; generous and a despiser of money."

It is curious how large a space beauty filled in the estimation of writers in the eighteenth century. Burnet never omits to notice the personal graces of his contemporaries. It was a fashion caught from the memoir writers of France. But the portraits on canvas of Bolingbroke hardly bear out Swift's encomium.

Even upon points generally considered matters of fact, controversy ever raged round Bolingbroke. While Lord Orrery —a scholar and somewhat of a philosopher himself—noted in Bolingbroke when an old man a sobering down of the passions, a dignity, an ease in conversation worthy of Pliny, it was

observed by Lord Chatham, then a very gay young man, who visited him at Battersea, that he was pedantic and fretful, and unreasonably cross to his wife. This view is corroborated by Lord Chesterfield, who somewhere said of him, that although no one wrote better about philosophy than Lord Bolingbroke, the over-roasting of a leg of mutton strangely ruffled his temper. He was not, however, a unique example of this particular form of human weakness; since no manufacturer is more loth to make private use of his own wares than is a philosopher to act up to his theories. Bolingbroke as an expounder of the philosophy of practical politics wielded great influence. The sceptical Toryism of Lord Beaconsfield and his school had its origin in the writings of Bolingbroke. Mr. Disraeli in early life acknowledged the debt he owed to his predecessor: and the politicians who to-day combine indifference about religion with a warm desire to maintain the Church, and scepticism in matters of authority with a regard for monarchical institutions, represent the

brilliant Tory whose adroit intrigues overturned the Ministry of Godolphin and destroyed the leadership of Harley. "What is man?" asked Bolingbroke, and then supplied from his own experience the reply, "polished, civilised, learned man. A liberal education fits him for slavery, and the pains he has taken give him the noble pretension of dangling away life in an ante-chamber, or of employing real talents to serve those who have none; or, which is worse than all the rest, of making his reason and his knowledge serve all the purposes of other men's follies and vices."

To no class of men does this satire more aptly apply than politicians, the most independent of whom rarely avoids trimming his sails to catch the popular breeze. Bolingbroke, to a great extent the originator of government by party, curiously enough embodied in his own person the fully developed vices of the party system. During the last four years of the Queen's reign, when the party to which he belonged was in the ascendant, it is difficult to trace in him a patriotic desire to direct the policy of

England into channels of prosperity and public virtue.

He was a man of supreme ability. His knowledge of history, his retentive memory, his keen vision, his habits of reflection, can have left little doubt in his mind as to the benefits accruing to England from the resistance to Louis the Fourteenth and from the Protestant succession. Yet he paltered with the great policy of William the Third, and while making himself responsible for the Treaty of Utrecht, he was only saved by the sudden death of the Queen from the crime of attempting a Stuart restoration. Bolingbroke's intention doubtless was to establish himself and his party permanently in office. This was his view of the chief use to which the system of government by party could be put. Perhaps it does not differ, except in point of method and cynical admission, from modern conceptions. Of course he failed, as we now know by experience he was sure to fail; but the platitudes of parliamentary government were then constitutional secrets, undivined by politicians. Bolingbroke is interesting to us as the most striking figure among

the originators of the new parliamentary system. With Marlborough disappeared the type of Tudor statesmen modified by contact with the Stuarts. He was the last of the Imperial Chancellors. Bolingbroke and his successor Walpole were the earlier types of constitutional statesmen among whom Mr. Pitt and, later, Mr. Gladstone stand pre-eminent.

To the charms of Bolingbroke in private life the correspondence of Swift and Pope testifies. Lord Chesterfield found him a man "who could not be resisted." It is not surprising when we find him appreciating at their full the qualities of sincerity, constancy, and tenderness in friendship.

This appreciation he recognised as out of tune with the time. In him it was bred by classical learning and by early associations; but he writes to Swift that the "truest reflection and at the same time the bitterest satire which can be made on the present age is this: that to think as you think, will make a man pass as romantick." No more damning criticism of a man could then be thought of than

this: that he should be suspected of romance. Romance was a relic of the barbarous reign of Elizabeth; and out of date in that of Queen Anne. Yet Bolingbroke was not afraid to say that there was "more pleasure and more merit too in cultivating friendships than in taking care of the State. Fools and knaves are generally best fitted for the last, and none but men of sense and virtue are capable of the other."

This was the softer side of Bolingbroke.

He and his friends, opponents of Marlborough, and contributors to his fall, are interesting to us mainly as furnishing the first examples of "Her Majesty's Opposition," as the authors of party government and the prototypes of cabinet ministers of to-day. Their ways of thought, their style of speech and of writing, may be dissimilar to those now in vogue, but they show greater resemblance to those of modern politicians than to those of the Ministers of William or of the Stuarts.

Bolingbroke may have appeared a

strange product of the eighteenth century to his contemporaries, but he would not have appeared peculiarly misplaced among the colleagues of Lord Randolph Churchill or Mr. Chamberlain.

IV

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

If we owe to the closing years of Queen Anne's reign the inception of that parliamentary system of government by Cabinet and Party which, subsequently developed by Walpole, obtains in assumed perfection at the present time, so another political engine now of enormous power finds its origin in that period. Bolingbroke, whose career must have seemed to his contemporaries, judging him by the ordinary standards of success, so sad a failure, has left a deeper mark upon the history of his country than any of his rivals save perhaps Walpole.

In politics he shaped, if he did not invent, a new system; but this was a trifling service compared with that which he performed in the cause of letters. He was the founder of a new style.

To read Bolingbroke in the order of literary productions of the eighteenth century, gives a sensation of stepping suddenly into the nineteenth. Among the literary giants of that period of renaissance in English prose, in point of style Bolingbroke stands supreme. And it is to Bolingbroke's example and initiative that we owe the complete revelation of the stormy genius of Swift.

All the more combative and interesting developments of modern journalism find their origin in the writings of this extraordinary man, whose ecclesiastical position could not restrain him from the use of any weapon however unclerical, and whose instinctive knowledge where and how to strike at an adversary has never been surpassed by modern editors with the experience of nearly two centuries before them.

Swift could not have foreseen in the embryonic newspapers of those days, the *Tatler* or the *Examiner*, the diurnal literary miracle which emanates at an early hour from Printing House Square. Science, training, organisation, and capital

have placed in the hands of the editor of the *Times* a machine, all the full uses of which it is hard for us adequately to appreciate. To what extent the *Times* reflects or moulds public opinion, is a controversial question, difficult to determine; but no unbiassed observer denies the enormous power and influence of that journal; while there is no politician, or author, or artist, or malefactor, or saint, who would not prefer to have a good word rather than a bad from its compilers, and who occasionally has not sought or desired its kind offices.

In the latter days of Queen Anne, although party journals already existed, it was the political pamphlet that attempted to effect what the party newspaper is supposed to effect nowadays.

Whether from Grub Street then, or Bouverie Street to-day, the same kind of appeal went forth to the people, to urge them to support the party that was always in the right against the party that ever was in the wrong. But in those primitive times a statesman was obliged to do his own pamphleteering, unless he could fortunately

enlist the services of an Addison or a Swift.

Walpole was the author of many pamphlets. Pulteney edited the *Craftsman*. In the earlier days of the century Steele's two newspapers, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, had enormous success in London. This success was largely due to Addison; for when later on, after the General Election of 1713, Steele having been elected for Stockbridge, was fired with all the political zeal of a new senator, and started a paper called the *Englishman*, without the collaboration of Addison, it failed to produce anything like the effect of his earlier ventures.

The *Spectator*, although published daily to the no small astonishment of the public of those days, was very unlike the modern conception of a readable daily newspaper. Addison's essays differed in plan and in workmanship from the ephemeral leading articles of the *Times*. According to our modern ideas, unbiassed by literary superstition, they were decidedly dull,

and, in spite of their great literary merit, would now be thought intolerable.

The knot of wits who were responsible for the production of Steele's newspapers were accustomed to meet daily at Button's Coffee-House, and their deliberations were conducted on much the same lines as those of the editors of *Punch* under the presidency of Mr. Burnand. Pope christened them "Addison's Senate," and no doubt the Whig pamphleteer enjoyed—as a shy man would—his acknowledged supremacy in a small coterie of intimate friends. Steele, Thomas Tickell, and Ambrose Philips were of the party. It was into this society that a strange clergyman suddenly obtruded himself. Clearly he knew none of those who frequented the coffee-house. He spoke to no one; but he would lay his hat down on a table, says Ambrose Philips, and walk backwards and forwards at a good pace for half an hour or an hour, without appearing to notice any one or anything that was said or done. He then would take up his hat, pay his money at the

bar, and walk away without opening his lips. He went by the name of the "Mad Parson." As a disputant, as a writer, as a pamphleteer, as a force in politics, and as a literary star, the mad parson eclipsed them all. Swift became, though not for long, the friend of Addison, of Steele, of Arbuthnot, of all the wits from whose intercourse party feeling and partisan bitterness were afterwards to cut him off. With Addison in the early days of their friendship he spent hours. In a copy of Addison's Travels presented by him to Swift, the following inscription appears:—"To Jonathan Swift, the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age, this book is presented by his most humble servant, the author." The language was not too strong for a man whose steadfastness to his political friends seems never to have wavered, and whose genius was classed by so great a judge as Voltaire, with cosmopolitan impartiality, as superior to that of Rabelais.

Swift's place in politics was for a while undetermined. His youth had been spent with a remarkable man. In

the intimacy of Moor Park to live with Sir William Temple was a political education.

Swift's superiority to Dr. Johnson in knowledge of practical politics was emphasised by Macaulay. The difference, he said, between a political pamphlet by Johnson and a political pamphlet by Swift is as great as the difference between an account of a battle by Southey and the account of the same battle by William Napier. This superiority of Swift, the practical knowledge of the man really versed in political affairs, and not merely the knowledge of the arm-chair politician or student, he attributes to the influence of Temple, with whom Swift lived as secretary for "board and twenty pounds a year."

Conscious of transcendent powers, Swift in his youth was forced to dine at the second table, salaried at twenty pounds a year, and found himself relegated to the society of Lady Temple's waiting-maid. It is not surprising that the iron went deep into his soul. Literary gifts render a man easily vain. Vanity in Swift was inordinate; pride immeasurable.

These largely helped to determine his place in political strife. In opinion he halted between the two parties. Inclined by his High Church sympathies to the Tories, he nevertheless, from an innate love of liberty and independence, gravitated towards Somers and the Whigs. His first appearance as a political writer was in 1701, when Somers and Halifax with others were impeached on account of their share in what was called the partition treaty. Swift published anonymously a remonstrance founded on the analogy of civil discords in Athens and Rome. "It was then," he says, "that I first began to trouble myself with the differences between the principles of Whig and Tory; having formerly employed myself in other, and I think much better speculations." He told Lord Somers that his familiarity with Greek and Latin authors necessarily made him a lover of liberty, and that he found himself inclined to be a Whig in politics; and besides, he did not see how upon any other principle it was possible to defend or submit to the Revolution; but as to religion, he was a High Churchman, and he could

not conceive how any one who wore the habit of a clergyman could be otherwise. It is astonishing that the *Tale of a Tub*, known by many to be his handiwork, and published in 1702, although written with no direct political, but rather with an ecclesiastical object in view, should not have opened the eyes of Godolphin and his friends to the value of Swift as an ally, and the danger of neglecting him. Doubtless the tone of that famous satire interfered with the preferment of Swift to any place of honour in the Church. It was considered in bad taste by some, almost blasphemous by others. By sceptics and scoffers at religion in England, by Voltaire in France, it was hailed with delight.

Like every satirist Swift was unable to measure the full force of the missile he had launched, or to gauge the direction of its recoil. What Somers and Godolphin and the Whigs thought is not known. That they abstained from any cordial recognition of Swift's talents is certain.

Steele, under the auspices and with

the assistance of Swift, commenced the *Tatler*, the first of those famous periodicals, the amazing developments of which are among the many wonders of the nineteenth century. Addison was not in the secret, nor a party to the first publications.

Swift's alliance with Addison and Steele lasted but a short time. The exigencies of party difference effected a breach which literary sympathy could not mend. After a year's absence in Ireland, he returned to London in 1710. He felt keenly the neglect of his Whig friends. He had expected preferment. He had obtained nothing.

The great Ministry of Godolphin and Marlborough was tottering to its fall. At such a moment the services of Swift might have been invaluable; but Godolphin's proud temper would not condescend to court the literary hack. Genius could not redeem a profession so debasing. "Did I not tell you of a great man who received me very coldly?" Swift writes. Lord Somers attempted civilities, but they failed to convince Swift of their sincerity in face

of the rudeness of the Lord Treasurer and the professional neglect in which he believed himself wilfully left.

Godolphin's angry reception of the Queen's commands to deliver up the staff of office gave Swift an occasion which he did not miss for paying off the score. His lampoon, "Sid Hamet's Rod," was the first of his literary ventures in the interests of the Tory party. Three days after its publication he was presented to Harley, and from this time, although he still saw Addison, all intercourse with the official Whigs came to an end. His acquaintance with Harley was followed immediately by an introduction to St. John.

In his *Journal to Stella* he dwells on friendly attentions which he received from the leader of the new Government. "I must tell you a great piece of refinement in Harley. He charged me to come and see him often; I told him I was loth to trouble him, in so much business as he had, and desired I might have leave to come at his levee; which he immediately refused, and said that was no place for friends."

St. John exerted all his famous powers of fascination to please him. To a man of Swift's nature, in which vanity so largely predominated, prototype as he was of the great profession of journalists, these cajoleries were irresistible. No one affected, and possibly believed that he felt, a profounder contempt for rank, and a stronger inclination to parade it. Perhaps the inference drawn by Sir Walter Scott is not unjust, that the advantages which he studiously undervalued held in truth more than their proper place in his estimation.

On one occasion, he writes to Stella, "I called at Mr. Secretary's to see what the devil ailed him on Sunday, and made him a very proper speech, and warned him never to appear cold to me, for I would not be treated like a schoolboy."

That, he explained, in allusion to his early life at Moor Park, was treatment of which he had already had ample experience, and he now expected every great Minister who honoured him with his acquaintance, if he heard or saw anything to his disadvantage, to let him know it in plain words, and not to put

him in pain to guess, by the change or coldness of his countenance or behaviour. "For it was what I would hardly bear from a crowned head, and I thought no subject's favour was worth it; and I designed to let my lord keeper and Mr. Harley know the same thing, that they might use me accordingly." This extreme sensitiveness to the passing moods of men was the secret of Swift's character. Inordinate pride was the mainspring of his actions in life; and the story of his political career, as well as of his domestic trials, must be read by the light of this ruling passion.

He chose to marry Stella secretly rather than to introduce Lady Temple's waiting-maid as his wife to his great London friends. He plumed himself upon never having asked a personal favour of Oxford,—except permission to attend him when the fallen Minister was imprisoned in the Tower. Yet no man ever had higher pretensions, or took a loftier view of his own deserts. That he earned by his great services every mark of gratitude from his party, no impartial critic of the time can doubt.

That he obtained such slight reward is a valuable commentary upon political gratitude in general, and upon the particular danger of incurring personal animosities even in the disinterested furtherance of a great cause.

The *Examiner* was by no means the only literary assistance that Swift furnished to Harley and St. John. His activity at this time was extraordinary. Neither prose nor verse was spared, if a weak place could be found in the armour of the Whigs. Perhaps the most masterly of these productions was the treatise on the *Conduct of the Allies*, which was published in 1711 while the question of peace or war was being argued in Parliament. It became the text-book of the Ministerialists; and its four editions contributed, in a degree now hard to realise, to their successful defence of their indefensible peace.

Swift's private life, his intimacy with Vanessa, his intrigues with Stella, although full of interest to the student of character and manners, have no direct bearing upon political or social events.

The temperament and talents of this

man, so singularly unsuited to his ecclesiastical profession in the reign of Anne, would have raised him to the highest offices of the Church a century earlier. He was a Churchman of the Tudor stamp; and under the seventh or eighth Henry his career might have rivalled that of Wolsey. He was born too late for his personal happiness and advantage, although opportunely for mankind.

Instead of an archbishopric and the Chancellor's Seal, he was destined to hold no office superior to that of the second-rate Deanery of St. Patrick, formerly obscure, but now for ever associated with his strange and strong personality.

In the domain of politics his position was that of a powerful party supporter, and not that of a party leader. During the eventful years which followed the fall of the Whigs, Swift's assistance was consistently sought and heartily given. When the quarrel between Oxford and Bolingbroke came to a head, he laboured hard to effect a reconciliation and to patch up peace between them. He loved Oxford as a man, but he assigned to him as a politician and col-

league the chief blame for this unhappy disruption of the Tory party. Whether his view was correct matters little. Desperate efforts were made by Bolingbroke to enlist Swift upon his side. To his honour Swift remained staunch to the man whom he had looked upon as his friend, although he conceived him to be in the wrong. He retired for a while to the house of a friend in Berkshire. While there he received many flattering proposals from Bolingbroke, who offered to reconcile him with the Queen and ensure him preferment. At the same moment, however, Oxford, a disgraced Minister, appealed to his comradeship. Swift, with rare disinterestedness, at once answered the call, and made the sacrifice of advancement on the altar of friendship. "I meddle not with his faults," he wrote, "as he was a Minister of State, but you know his personal kindness to me was excessive; he distinguished and chose me above all men when he was great; and his letter to me the other day was the most moving imaginable."

The death of the Queen swept away

all necessity for choice between the rival statesmen, and all necessity for their reconciliation, enveloping Bolingbroke and Oxford and Swift in one common proscription. For six years the Dean lived peacefully in Ireland; but in 1720 his political activity recommenced.

He appeared, however, in a new part. No longer the most formidable scribe of a political party, he stepped into the political arena as the defender of the supposed rights of his Irish compatriots. To Swift, as much as to any one man, is due the fatal distinction which has been drawn between the native Irish and the English settlers in Ireland. With all the skill of which he was master, he drove home this childish and unhealthy delusion.

The Drapier Letters, famous for their successful attack upon a project quite indefensible both from the standpoint of the time as well as from that of the present day, nevertheless performed a sorry service for Ireland. They served to accentuate the lamentable differences between the Irish people and the Executive Government as well as between the

men of Irish and of English blood. They helped to connect Irish "patriotism," as this false sentiment was called, with a just resentment at high-handed and impolite acts, and they went far to bring about that state of feeling and rank growth of ideas which, in these days, has rendered necessary a partial abandonment of the great policy of Mr. Pitt for the unity of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is not part of the Irish nature to forecast consequences, or the Drapier Club, formed in honour of Swift, would not have included men seriously anxious for the welfare of their country.

To have obtained the surrender of Wood's patent, to have destroyed "Wood's halfpence," which was the immediate object of the Drapier Letters, was to have earned, it was conceived, immortal gratitude. But the boon was obtained at a heavy price, the payment of which extends even to these days.

Rancour, frothy demonstrations of ill-will, want of confidence, false distinctions drawn between men of blood intermingled for centuries, and of interests absolutely

similar, are part of the legacy which Swift left to his countrymen in Ireland. Unfortunately no statesmanship equal to Chatham's, no genius comparable to Sir Walter Scott's, have been found to remove the burden of misunderstanding and prejudice which has broken down the patience of the English people.

The Drapier's head, at the termination of his victorious struggle, became a sign ; his portrait was engraved, woven on handkerchiefs, struck upon medals, and displayed everywhere as the liberator of Ireland. In the highest and most permanent interests of that distressful country, it would perhaps have been better could it have been displayed over Temple Bar.

In 1726, for the first time since the Queen's death, Swift visited London. His old friends rejoiced to see him. They were a broken and disorganised party. Bolingbroke had indeed returned from exile, but his authority and influence in politics were lost. Swift now sought to draw nearer to Pope. He visited him at his villa near Twickenham, and spent much time in his com-

pany. Pope, though a political friend, was before all things a man of letters. Swift cared nothing for literary excellence. In his view literature was but a means to a political end. Pope aroused no jealousy in him. England had now settled down quietly under the government of Walpole. The practical sense of Swift urged him to recognise this state of facts, and his genuine desire to secure benefits for Ireland assisting him, he obtained through Lord Peterborough an introduction to Walpole.

It was difficult for an English Minister to overcome the natural prejudice of the official mind against the author of the Drapier Letters. The interview achieved no result beyond rumours that Swift had passed over to the Whigs. Pulteney angled for his support. There was a chance of his being once more drawn into the vortex of English political strife. Pope, with the instincts of true friendship, urged him not to commit himself, to remain

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

To this Swift replied that he need

have no fear; that it was too late in life for him to act otherwise than to stand aloof from party struggles; and that the road of virtue was for him consequently easy. Age but rarely dims the passion of so strenuous a soul as that of Swift, or hardens into indifference a mind so sensitive as his, and *Gulliver's Travels* was the last great contribution to political satire of one who has no equal in the calendar of English journalists.

It is unnecessary to follow Swift through his long public career of twenty-eight years. Still less important, except to students of psychology, is the sad end to this storm-tossed life. That Swift was unfortunate in his choice of a profession no one ever doubted. That he was unlucky to have been born under the Whig constitution may be admitted. Notwithstanding these drawbacks to his personal success, his work for English literature was valuable and solid. He stands next to Bolingbroke as the founder of modern style. Its character has been said to be, that it consists of proper words in proper places; and no higher praise could well be given. Its

extreme simplicity was noted by Dr. Johnson. "The rogue never hazards a figure," he said, not disapprovingly. In conceiving, as he did, the "Society of Brothers," a band of men of first-rate eminence and talent, selected it is true from the Tory party only, his primary object was to limit and fix the English tongue by a general standard, after the manner of the French Academy. Perhaps it is as well that he failed in his immediate object; but indirectly he did, as he desired to do, "correct, improve, and ascertain" the English tongue; and from the age of Queen Anne, of which Swift was the principal literary star amid a galaxy of talent, dates the renaissance of English prose writing.

Of his work, that which he designed to be ephemeral has outlasted in popularity his more serious efforts. *Gulliver's Travels* will live as long as the literature of this country is preserved. His *Journal to Stella* is an invaluable commentary upon the time which it embraces. Among the lighter prose pieces the *Hints for Conversation* and his *Advice to a young Girl* are charming examples of his cool

judgment and easy style. As a writer of verse he was as skilful as Prior, more witty than Gay, but lacked the smoothness of Pope, his great contemporary and friend at Twickenham.

The songs said to be contributed by Swift to the *Beggar's Opera* compare favourably with those by Gay himself. It is, however, as a writer of simple prose, in which he clothed ideas of singular ingenuity, and reflections of curious and manifold interest, that Swift will be remembered. Among ephemeral writers upon controversial topics he is unsurpassed. Not even Junius can be compared with him. His place among men of letters is especially interesting as the founder in England of that great school of journalism of which Voltaire and Diderot were the origin in France, and which has become part of the machinery of government in both countries.

V

THE INVENTION OF CABINET RESPONSIBILITY

A YOUNG Englishman reading of the Restoration period, of its cosmopolitan manners, its silks and satins, its polished witticism, and its Anacreontic revels, cannot recognise his fellow-countrymen. Charles the Second himself was in habits and ways of speech a Frenchman. The change was rapid. With the accession of George the First, that is to say after a lapse of time less than divides us to-day from the birth of the Prince of Wales, or even of younger children of Queen Victoria, England had so altered, that the figures on the political stage seem to us perfectly familiar.

King George was a German of the type to which we are now accustomed in

the Royal House. His Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, possessed all those characteristics of the sporting squire, fond of good living, and keen about politics, with which English lads of this day are familiar. He had had an Eton education. He had shown himself fond of all games and field sports, and yet could be sober and diligent in his work. After the fashion of his race, as a lad and through life, his love of sport prevailed over every passion. A letter from his huntsman or his gamekeeper would always have precedence over any political despatch, however important. To shrewd observers it was clear, when the Queen's death destroyed the government of Bolingbroke, that Walpole was the rising man. At first under the new reign little was heard of him. Until the Elector of Hanover could be informed that he had become King of England, and could take possession of his kingdom, the supreme authority was vested in eighteen Lords Justices named in a document long kept secret, and only disclosed by the Hanoverian agent in London on the death of Queen Anne.

From this document two things were clear :—

First, that King George intended to rely upon the Whigs. Secondly, that he distrusted powerful party leaders. None of these were included in the list of Lords Justices ; not even Marlborough. Presently, when George the First landed in England, he chose for his Minister Lord Townshend ; yet so afraid was the King of a tyrannical Junto, that although he had selected from among the Whigs a Minister of little weight, he could not bring himself to give him the Lord Treasurer's staff. Townshend became Secretary of State. Associated with him was General Stanhope. The Treasury was put into commission. King George showed prudence and wisdom. He was phlegmatic of temperament and not the reverse of shrewd. He was a man of fifty-four, with experience of government and of the world. Quite conscious of the fact that he was a foreigner in England, aware of the inconvenience his ignorance of the language must occasion to him and to his Ministers, he determined to proceed warily.

Although Townshend and Stanhope led the new Government; to use modern phraseology, in the House of Lords and Commons, real authority was vested in one who was not even included in the Cabinet. The Paymaster of the Forces was Walpole. Comparatively speaking it was a humble office. But Walpole's influence over Townshend was very great; while his debating power was second only to that of Bolingbroke. Such a position would now be wholly false, and in those days could not last under the novel conditions of parliamentary life. It is no matter of surprise therefore that in a few months' time, October 1715, Walpole was promoted to the high office of First Lord of the Treasury.

The new Parliament had met in the month of March; and its assembling was remarkable for three events. The King, though present at the opening, was unable from his ignorance of English to deliver the customary speech, which was read in the King's presence by the Chancellor. In the House of Lords, Lord Bolingbroke delivered his last oration in Parliament. In the Commons,

the address was moved by Walpole, already in reality the leader of the House, and soon to become its unquestioned master for a period of over a quarter of a century.

The quiet and peaceful accession of George the First was the final triumph of the Revolution of 1688. With Bolingbroke's fall all rational hope of a Stuart restoration vanished. Henceforth the principle that the Crown devolved not by hereditary right but by an Act of Parliament, was firmly established.

It was natural and proper that the party favourable to the Protestant succession should carry on the Government of the new King. The General Election of 1715 returned a Whig majority to the House of Commons, reversing the national judgment of two years back.

To Marlborough the command of the army was given.

The Earl of Ormond, the Commander-in-Chief, to whom the King announced his removal and the name of his successor almost immediately on his arrival at St. James's, at once left London, and shortly

left England for ever. Bolingbroke had not neglected to adopt similar precautions.

One of the King's first acts was to reconstitute the Privy Council. The numbers of this body were reduced to thirty-three. All the Tory Ministers of Queen Anne were excluded. Eight of the new Privy Councillors formed the Cabinet: Townshend and Stanhope, the Chancellor Cowper, Sunderland, Nottingham, Halifax, Somers, and Marlborough. Lord Somers' appointment was rather complimentary than effective, for he was very infirm. Marlborough's great name was a source of strength and honour to the Government, but he had no authority or influence over his colleagues or over the King.

Sunderland, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, was rarely present at the Cabinet Council. Real power was vested in Townshend, Stanhope, and Cowper. The ablest of them was undoubtedly the Chancellor, and on many difficult questions his authority prevailed. General Stanhope had been selected for office by the King himself without reference

to Townshend. The explanation of this choice lay in the circumstance that of all living Englishmen, except Marlborough, his reputation stood highest on the Continent. He was a soldier, a diplomatist, and a man of letters; and he had been thrown into intimate relations with foreign statesmen. Townshend's influence, however, in the Cabinet was in reality supreme. It was not that he was a man of specially strong character. On the contrary, vehement and choleric by nature, he was somewhat infirm of purpose; but behind him stood Walpole. On Walpole's judgment he relied. He took on all important questions the advice of the Paymaster General; for he was shrewd enough to appreciate that just as Walpole's judgment was sound, so his authority over the House of Commons was already dangerously assured.

One great constitutional change had quietly taken place. The Sovereign no longer attended the deliberations of the Cabinet. Queen Anne had presided at her Council. Sometimes, in a fit of spleen, after Lady Masham's influence

had undermined Godolphin, the Queen would sit silent at the Board for awhile, and then suddenly, without a word of explanation, rise and break up the Council. It is curious to note that the Council Board was the only table at which Queen Anne was accustomed to sit down with a subject. Her habit was invariably to take her dinner alone. Not even Prince George, her husband, sat at dinner in her presence. Custom in these matters, as in others, changed rapidly; for in a few years' time, Queen Caroline dined in Walpole's house at Chelsea. It is true that her host after taking his place behind her chair and handing her the first dish, dined with her suite in an adjoining room. But Lady Walpole sat at the Queen's table. Queen Anne sat, however, with her Ministers in Council. King George's presence in the Council Chamber would have been altogether superfluous, and an inconvenience, for he neither spoke nor understood English. He had never cared to learn to do either. So the Cabinet, owing to chance, glided into a habit which has since become a great

constitutional usage. The Cabinet Council had not at this time assumed, if it has yet done so, a final shape. Twenty years later it consisted of fourteen members. These included the great household officers. Even this number is smaller than that to which in quite recent times we have been accustomed. Walpole found so large a body an unwieldy instrument. He constituted gradually and unostentatiously an inner Cabinet, consisting of the two Secretaries of State, the Chancellor, and himself; and the confidential business was transacted by this select quartet.

The fiction that power resided in the Cabinet as a whole was not disturbed. So little, however, was it really the case, that the Duke of Newcastle, with singular tactlessness, on one occasion, when the King's speech was under discussion, having omitted a paragraph which Walpole desired to suppress altogether, instead of quietly dropping out the obnoxious words without comment, turned and whispered to Lord Hardwicke, the Chancellor, for some minutes, and then adding, "You take me," passed

on to the next paragraph. The Chancellor said nothing, but took snuff and looked wise, we are told, which under the circumstances was perhaps the simplest course open to him. But the incident gave offence then, as it would give offence now, to the Minister's colleagues. Indeed, a Minister could scarcely openly exhibit want of confidence in his colleagues in Cabinet to-day, however strong the temptation. It has happened that, for the effective carrying out of certain acts of high policy, it was, in recent years, still found necessary at times to have an inner Cabinet within the Cabinet; and during Mr. Gladstone's administration from 1880 to 1885 it was found that, without such an arrangement, no difficult contentious business could be transacted, when absolute secrecy was essential to success. In many respects, even to the detail of limiting refreshment to plain biscuits and water, Cabinet Councils under the presidency of Walpole resembled those credibly believed to be held in Downing Street in these days. Time was wasted then, as now, by garrulous Ministers; tempers were

tried by overbearing ones. Authority exercised was in inverse ratio to talking done. One advantage is enjoyed by Ministers in the present day. Cabinet Councils under George the First were generally summoned in the cockpit at Whitehall, about eight o'clock at night, after dinner; and there is no limit to the possibilities of discursiveness after dinner.

Queen Anne's Cabinets were held as a rule on Sunday evenings at six, but then the Queen's presence controlled the natural flow of discussion.

It is not wonderful that Lord Hervey, who left a few, unfortunately a very few, notes in reference to these Councils, frequently complains of waste of time. Walpole, to judge from the description, spoke little. The initiative seems to have been taken, and the discussions conducted, by the Duke of Newcastle, who was Secretary of State. The Duke went by the nickname of "hubble-bubble." Nothing could convey to us a better idea of the authority of Walpole than his silence on these occasions. When he thought fit to

interfere, all the "mutes and starers," as Hervey calls them, at once chimed in with "to be sure, to be sure."

Walpole's position is well illustrated by a scene which Lord Hervey describes. The business was over, the Cabinet was breaking up, and Walpole was on his legs to go away, when Newcastle said: "If you please, I would speak one word to you before you go"; to which Walpole replied: "I do not please, my Lord; but if you will, you must." "Sir, I shall not trouble you long." "Well, my Lord, that's something; but I had rather not be troubled at all: won't it keep cold till to-morrow?" "Perhaps not, sir." "Well, come then, let's have it"; upon which encouraging prelude they retired to a corner of the room, where his Grace whispered very softly, and Sir Robert answered nothing but aloud, and said nothing aloud but every now and then, "Pooh! pshaw! O Lord! O Lord! Pray be quiet. My God, can't you see it is over?"

The subject of the conversation matters very little, but the scene throws light on relations and manners between colleagues

which, in these days, would scarcely conduce to the maintenance of friendly agreement in Council.

Walpole's greatest achievement, during a long tenure of office, was his careful tending of this institution of government by a Cabinet, that is to say by a Committee of the Privy Council, at the deliberations of which the Sovereign was not present, nominally responsible to the King, but in reality dependent on a parliamentary majority. It was hard work, and the means used, in a venal age, were not pure according to modern standards.

The Sovereign was still powerful enough to embarrass and even temporarily to destroy a Minister. But the King could not for long contend against a Minister backed by Parliament. When George the First went on a visit to Hanover, accompanied by Stanhope and Sunderland, he was induced by their jealous representations to dismiss Townshend. Walpole at once resigned. It so happened that this became Walpole's opportunity. He fully availed himself of it.

Owing to the wild speculations arising out of the South-Sea Bubble, the finances of the country had been thrown into confusion. Walpole's sound business capacity had never misled him as to the inevitable result of Law's projects. He had prophesied their failure. Meanwhile in his private capacity he had availed himself of the public madness to add to his fortune by purchase and sale, at a thousand per cent profit, of South-Sea Stock. His contemporaries, whatever view of such a transaction may now be taken, admired his shrewd perspicacity. In the eyes of the country Walpole was the one strong capable man. The Ministry was certainly not an impressive one, and the Ministers carried individually little weight in public estimation. When Stanhope was made a Viscount in 1717, and the lead of the House of Commons thereupon devolved upon Addison, Craggs, and Aislabie, they were quite unable to hold their own against Walpole. Addison, so eminent in letters, was the feeblest of Ministers. As Secretary of State his failure was painful. Craggs was called Lord Sunderland's

man—a fairly honest hard-working obscure man. Aislabie, as Finance Minister, had trafficked largely in South-Sea Stock, and his reputation, unlike Walpole's, had suffered. When the Bubble burst, the popular fury was concentrated upon these Ministers; and the eyes of all men turned to Walpole. With patriotic shrewdness he showed himself anxious to stand between the King's Government and the popular indignation. His task was facilitated in a strange fashion. Lord Stanhope had literally died of rage, occasioned by a personal attack upon him in the House of Lords by the young and dissolute Duke of Wharton; Craggs speedily followed him, succumbing to an attack, quite as deadly, of smallpox; while within three weeks of the Elections, on the 19th of April 1722, Sunderland passed away beyond the reach of parliamentary censures and impeachments. It is impossible at the same time to omit to notice, although public events were not affected thereby, the death, in the month of June, of John Duke of Marlborough. Aislabie was expelled

from the House of Commons and sent to the Tower.

Amid this murrain of leading politicians, Walpole, as it can be well imagined, remained master of the field. Fortune had cleared his path of all competitors. The Elections of March 1722 had returned a large majority for the Whigs, and the Jacobites and Tories recognised that, except in conspiracy, their chances were hopeless.

One of the first at length clearly to understand the hopelessness of the Jacobite cause was Bolingbroke. This conviction on his part led to his giving explanations which resulted in a pardon under the Great Seal; and in 1723, within a year of Walpole's accession to office, Bolingbroke returned to England.

The leader of the Tory party was then Sir William Wyndham, a man of stainless honour, who contrived to represent with unblemished reputation a disreputable cause. The other great Tory leader had been Simon Harcourt; but "Trimming Harcourt," as Swift maliciously called him, had recognised the power of Walpole even before it occurred to Boling-

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broke. As months rolled on, Walpole's path grew smoother. One serious attempt by a really capable man was made to overthrow him. This rival was Carteret, afterwards Lord Granville, a man of brilliant parts, a scholar, a linguist, and a daring politician. But he had grave moral defects. His ambition was lofty but too fitful. His indifference to the more tender relations of political friendship was profound; and in moments of trial such indifference, felt and reciprocated, is fatal to leadership. He was said to possess no feeling except that of thirst; for his love of wine was unusual even in those wine-loving times.

Such a man, however great his abilities, had no chance against the bluff joviality and shrewd comradeship of Walpole. Carteret took advantage, as had Sunderland on a previous occasion, of a journey to Hanover with the King to try and trip up the First Lord of the Treasury. But Townshend, who had also accompanied the King, supported as usual by the cool advice of Walpole, was too strong an antagonist. King George had gained experience. Wary he had ever been.

Carteret's manœuvre failed; and his failure left Walpole complete master of the Court, as he already was of the Parliament. Henceforth, for five years, about the full term of a modern Administration, he and his colleagues quietly ruled an uneventful England. Then there occurred a crisis, which his enemies hailed as a certain prelude to his final disappearance from office. King George died on his way to Hanover in 1727.

In point of fact casual observers and superficial critics had not grasped the full extent of the changes which government by Cabinet, based on party organisation, had brought about in political life.

The work of King George the First, as Ranke points out, had been to keep the Pretender at a distance, and to establish on a firm basis the Whig-Hanoverian government of England. This end was gained. The weakness of character so marked in the Pretender, and the firm attitude of the Whigs, had contributed to make the King's task easy.

Lady Cowper, wife of the Chancellor, whose charming and interesting Journal was for so long withheld from the world,

relates how peevish the sense of their complete discomfiture had rendered the Jacobites. At the coronation of George I. "My Lady Dorchester stood underneath me, and when the Archbishop went round the throne demanding the consent of the people, she turned about to me and said: 'Does the old Fool think that anybody here will say No! to his question when there are so many drawn swords?'" There was no remedy but patience; and so everybody was pleased or pretended to be so.

A peevish sense of weakness on the one side, a calm, orderly demeanour on the other, and "so many drawn swords." Such was the attitude of the two parties into which England was divided. How could the weaker have reasonable hope of success? When George II. succeeded his father, the Jacobite cause was at a still lower ebb. Bolingbroke had accepted a pardon from the Hanoverian monarch. Lord Harcourt had thrown in his lot with the enemy. The Jacobites were left to the tender mercies of the wild Duke of Wharton, and of Bishop Atterbury. Hope being altogether inde-

pendent of reasonable probability, the death of the King brought a gleam of hope to the Jacobite cause. At any rate for the Tory party, if not for the exiled family, there was the chance of Walpole's disgrace.

The Prince of Wales had quarrelled much with the King, and had spoken in harsh and bitter terms of Walpole. It was certain that he would try to govern by means of the discontented Whigs and Ministers chosen from the Opposition. Who could tell to what confusion such an attempt might lead? In this confusion lay hope for the Jacobite cause.

It was soon discovered that the caprice of a sovereign was no longer the dominant force in politics; and the personal predilections of the King had to yield to his necessities. These were not immediately apparent; but a very few weeks served to bring them into strong relief, and to strip the King's mind of all desire to be rid of his father's Minister. It is curious to find Walpole, quite in the old manner, killing two horses in his ride from Chelsea to Richmond in order to be the first to convey to the Prince news of his father's

death. When he asked for instructions, the King told him harshly to go to Chiswick and take them from Sir Spencer Compton. It was no surprise to Walpole. Compton was a favourite with the new King. For years he had held the office of Treasurer to the Prince of Wales, and also had been elected to the dignified office of Speaker by the House of Commons. It was not yet known that he was incompetent in business: a "plodding heavy fellow, with great application, but no talents."

To him therefore all eyes turned for a while. His house was besieged by courtiers, and by the great herd of aspirants to honours and to the smiles of princes. Walpole was abandoned. At Leicester House, the residence of the King, Walpole and Lady Walpole met not only with neglect but rudeness, until a word from the Queen effected an instantaneous change in the demeanour of the mobile society of the Court.

Lady Walpole herself describes the difficulty she experienced in paying her respects to the King and Queen, unable to make her way between the scornful

backs and elbows of her late devotees, or to approach nearer than the third or fourth row of cringing courtiers; but no sooner was she descried by her Majesty, than the Queen cried aloud, "There I am sure I see a friend"; the torrent thereupon divided, and shrunk to either side; and "as I came away," exclaimed Lady Walpole, "I might have walked over their heads if I had pleased." The Queen's notice of Lady Walpole did in fact indicate the sure set of the tide in favour of Walpole.

The constitutional battle in truth was won. The Whig-Hanoverian tradition was to be maintained; and that new constitutional government of the country, by Ministers responsible primarily to Parliament, and only in a minor degree to the King, was found to have taken root in the habits of Englishmen.

George the Second had not the abilities of his father. Fortunately for him, by his side stood the Queen, Caroline of Anspach, who showed through her life that capacity for government which England has been lucky enough to find in female sovereigns.

In reality Queen Caroline was sovereign. No longer young, she nevertheless retained traces of beauty. Her influence over the King was absolute. He, with the usual blindness of husbands who are ruled or deceived by their wives, flattered himself that he was the most absolute of monarchs. It was a favourite topic with him. Charles, he used to say, had been ruled by his mistresses; William by his Dutchmen; Queen Anne by her favourites. "But who, do they say, rules now?" he would ask triumphantly, amid the smiles of his Court. Walpole, with his usual shrewdness, had long noticed the intellectual and moral strength of the Princess. He respected her understanding, and she knew that he did so. She, on the other hand, appreciated his power. She determined that he should remain the King's Minister. Another clear-sighted observer, Cardinal Fleury, then controlling the policy of France, foresaw that in Walpole lay the chief hope of stability in the internal government and foreign policy of England.

Two superficial causes, based on Wal-

pole's parliamentary position, which was the determining factor of the whole situation, decided the action of the King.

Horace Walpole, brother of the First Lord of the Treasury, was at that time English Minister in Paris. He was sent over by Cardinal Fleury to the King to warn him against shattering an alliance with the only power in Europe then specially friendly to England. George the Second was much impressed, and the point was strongly urged by the Queen, with her usual force and effect upon her husband's mind. Secondly, the King's Civil List had to be fixed by a parliamentary vote. Sir Spencer Compton was appealed to, and a sum named. Walpole, when approached, was more generous. He could afford to be so. It was doubtful whether Compton could obtain from the House of Commons the lesser sum. It was certain that Walpole could obtain the greater. Pulteney, anxious to trip up the Minister, it is true, made ample promises. The Queen's sagacity, uninfluenced by the showy protestations of Pulteney, determined the

King to adhere to the man who could undoubtedly secure for him an ample income, and who was not obliged, as was poor Sir Spencer Compton, to have the Royal Messages to Parliament composed by deputy.

So Walpole remained, where from the beginning it was certain he would have to remain, at the helm of State. His position was now assured to him so long as he could retain for himself by superior weight in debate, and for his Cabinet by adroit management in the lobbies, a majority in the House of Commons. An Opposition was to develop which was later on to destroy his power; but this took fifteen years to accomplish from the period when his authority was recognised by Caroline of Anspach and the King.

VI

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOVERNMENT BY MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

WHEN the long administration of Walpole came to an end, it was said that his fall was owing to inordinate ambition, and to his inability to brook a rival, or to tolerate near himself lofty talent. Possibly many of the troubles which beset him towards the close of his life he might have been spared had he possessed the art of attaching to his fortunes younger men at once ambitious and able. This art unquestionably he did not possess; yet it is by no means certain that the admission into his government of Pulteney or Carteret, or Cobham or Pitt, would have given him a longer tenure of office.

Walpole never was more powerful than

after the quarrel with Townshend, when, with the exception of Lord Hardwicke, his Cabinet contained no one of first-rate capacity. Arrayed against him in heterogeneous confusion were all the talents of Parliament. In subsequent days the most powerful of his successors, the younger Pitt, found himself in a similar parliamentary position. On the other hand, Ministries of "All the Talents," "Broad-bottomed Administrations," to use the slang names of Cabinets formed by Mr. Pelham, Lord Grenville, and Lord Aberdeen, have been notorious for their weakness, and have ever been shortlived.

Walpole's instinct for government was so remarkable, his command over his passions so well assured, that if he excluded brilliant talents, and chose hard-working dull officials as his subordinates, it may reasonably be attributed to calculation rather than to petty jealousy. Facile criticism suggests that in 1741 his position would have been stronger if he had in 1727 remained friendly with Carteret and Townshend, and had given high office to William Pulteney. Ex-

perience of other Ministries raises reasonable doubts whether such a combination could have lasted one-third of that long period of office. Walpole maintained his power over the House of Commons, and it was thus that he was able to rule England for over twenty years: a longer period than Napoleon the First or his nephew ruled France, a longer period than Prince Bismarck controlled the destinies of Germany. It was a great feat of politics, and wellnigh reduces the critic to silence. Certainly it may be admitted that Walpole recognised and clearly asserted his superiority in the Cabinet. For the quarrel with Townshend numerous reasons have been sought. It has even been suggested that one of them was Townshend's jealousy of the great house at Houghton which Walpole had rebuilt at enormous cost, the hospitalities of which eclipsed those of Lord Townshend's neighbouring home at Raynham.

Walpole's own account of the matter has an air of greater probability. "So long," he said, "as the firm was Town-

shend and Walpole, all went well; as soon as it became Walpole and Townshend, things went wrong." It was the clash of two somewhat arbitrary natures, and the strife for mastery, that broke up the firm. That some of Walpole's methods, according to modern standards, were arbitrary, cannot be questioned.

To dismiss William Pitt from the Blues because of a violent parliamentary harangue would not be approved now; but the definition of a placeman at that time was not altogether clear, and even in these days a Minister would not tolerate a vituperative speech from a groom-in-waiting. Much, too, has been made of Walpole's suppression of the supplementary portion of the *Beggar's Opera*, in which he was lampooned in the character of the highwayman Macheath. The irritation caused by this play appears to us excessive. Gay, the author, was naturally annoyed at the treatment his play received. His friends rallied to his support, notably the beautiful and eccentric Duchess of Queensberry, granddaughter of the Chancellor Lord Clarendon. In fighting the battle

of her literary friend, she presumed so far as to incur the displeasure of the King, and to find herself excluded from Court. Her written reply to the verbal intimation that her presence would not in future be pleasing to the Sovereign, was couched in a form that would create astonishment even in these democratic days: "The Duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well pleased that the King hath given her so agreeable a command as to stay from Court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility on the King and Queen."

No one would have been more astonished than the Duchess of Queensberry could she have foreseen that a century and a half later the Lord Chamberlain would still retain and exercise the power to suppress political caricature on the stage. Arbitrary as Walpole's act of rigid censorship appeared to his contemporaries, it should not cause surprise in these days.

The novelty of Walpole's maxims of government was fully recognised by those among his contemporaries who

were interested in politics. When he insisted on the dismissal of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Clinton from their household offices it excited little comment, as no personal motive was attributed to him by unprejudiced persons. It was plain that he was carrying out a plan of homogeneous government by a party of men who should at any rate outwardly appear to be loyal to one another; and it was generally recognised and admitted that his plan deserved a fair trial.

Official mutiny he could not tolerate, nor could he permit it to go unpunished. This was a natural and inevitable development of government by a Cabinet responsible to Parliament. It was immediately followed by another innovation, which since has obtained a hold upon party life in England. Walpole, finding himself in a parliamentary difficulty, and suffering from slack attendance of members, summoned a private meeting of the Whig party, and delivered a speech something between a lecture and what in the political slang of recent times is called a manifesto. The effect of this proceeding

was then found to be that which, at the present day, a similar step on the part of a Prime Minister generally produces, and for about a week after the meeting there seemed to be "a resurrection of that party spirit which had been so long dormant, that most people imagined it was quite extinct; and the next day in the House, where the industry of both parties had contributed to bring up above five hundred members (in the appointment of a Committee on Excise), the Court list was carried by a majority of ninety, most of the lists on both sides being entire." Innovations did not rest here. About this time there commenced a practice, which has since become a constitutional privilege, although one not altogether free from abuse, that of putting questions in Parliament upon matters of fact to Ministers. The first recorded instance occurred in the House of Lords, in a matter of no present importance. Lord Cowper, the ex-Chancellor, was the inquisitive member. Rising in his place, he mentioned a certain rumour as "being a matter in which the public was highly concerned,

and desired those in the administration to acquaint the House whether there was any ground for that report." Lord Sunderland replied very much as Lord Salisbury might to-day reply to a similar question.

Walpole seems to have possessed instinctively the knowledge of parliamentary requirements which a century and a half of public experience of party government, sixty years of which may be counted as personal, has bestowed upon the "oldest parliamentary hand" of modern times. No one, as was made plain before Walpole's accession to office, could be more violent, more unscrupulous in opposition than he. Yet as a Minister, with full responsibility upon him, anxious above all things to retain office, no one could be more averse from violent measures of policy. It was said of Callistus by a contemporary that he knew that active steps and even violent enterprises are a means of acquiring power, but that to keep it, palliatives, delays, and gentle methods are safest. "Prioris quoque regiae peritus, et potentiam cautis quam acrioribus consiliis tutius

haberi." This invaluable knowledge was also granted to Walpole.

"Quieta non movere" became his official maxim. Of course he occasionally blundered. His attempt to touch the Excise was a breach of his own maxim, and involved him in difficulties which nearly destroyed his power. His skill in escaping from an untenable position saved him, but it was at the price of his measure. Walpole was a peace Minister. He has been somewhat extravagantly praised on this account. After the exhausting wars of William and Marlborough, England and her old enemy France were disinclined for war. It was as much a period of peaceful reaction as the thirty years' peace after Waterloo, or the same period of exemption after Sedan.

It so happened that Walpole's administration coincided with this period. He got the praise, just as in later years Mr. Pitt got the blame for a war he was powerless to prevent. England presently recovered her strength, and as the younger generation which knew not war grew to manhood, the innate warlike tendency

of the race asserted itself, and Walpole, in spite of himself, was dragged into European conflict. A more conscientious statesman might have resigned rather than give way. Walpole was eminently practical, and never prided himself on his conscience. He was an "old parliamentary hand"; nothing more.

It has been since observed, that there is no statesmanship which finds resistance to useless, and expensive, and even immoral wars, so hopeless as that of the peace-exalting old parliamentary hand. Walpole grumbled, but he bowed his head, and remained in office as a mark for the flouts and jeers of the younger members of the House of Commons.

Although he yielded to pressure rather than lose office, he showed plenty of courage as well as of resource in self-defence. Lord Hervey was accustomed frequently to give the King accounts of the attacks made upon his Minister in Parliament, and of what Sir Robert had said in reply to bitter invective, when the King would often cry out—with colour flushing into his cheeks, with tears starting to his eyes, and with the

accompaniment of a vehement oath—"He is a brave fellow; he has more spirit than any man I ever knew."

This trait in Walpole, his jovial courage, was one of the secrets of his power. The country gentlemen admired the sportsmanlike pluck of the Minister who would go at an opponent as resolutely as he would at a fence out hunting. His temper was imperturbable. He was the most good-natured man living. Once he lost his temper at a Council, and immediately broke up the Council, saying no man was fit for business with a ruffled temper. He had nothing of the weakness which was the ruin of Pulteney. He was untainted with avarice. His expenditure was lavish. If he spent the King's money in securing his parliamentary majority, he spent his own at Houghton in entertaining his friends and neighbours. The appointment of his household was on a scale befitting the magnificence of his house and gardens. Three thousand a year was the cost of his annual hunt for the benefit of his Norfolk neighbours. He had other tastes which did

him no harm in the eyes of his contemporaries.

Molly Skerret was famous for her beauty and for the passion with which she inspired Walpole. If he had paid five thousand pounds as entrance money, besides an annual allowance, to this pretty daughter of a London merchant, she repaid it by faithful attachment. She may have been really fond of the Minister, although to the Queen, who certainly appreciated his political capacity, if not his personal charms, the idea seemed absurd. "She must be a clever gentlewoman," was her Majesty's comment, "to have made him believe that she cares for him on any other score than his money; and to show you what fools we all are in some point or other, she has certainly told him some fine story or other of her love and her passion, and that poor man, *avec ce gros corps, ces jambes enflées, et ce vilain ventre*, believes her. Ah, what is human nature!"

Molly Skerret, as the Queen surmised, was a very clever gentlewoman, for she contrived to captivate Lady Mary Wortley

Montague, one of whose famous letters was addressed to her, and Lady Stafford, persons altogether outside her sphere of life.

Her powers of fascination are indirectly borne witness to by Lady Mary, who writes: "I see everybody, but converse with nobody but *des amis choisis*; in the first rank of these are Lady Stafford and dear Molly Skerret."

It was said of Walpole that he was ill-bred, but no proof of his want of manners, if he is judged by the standard of the time, has been recorded. In conversation with the Queen he used coarse expressions, but they were not coarser than those often in the mouth of her Majesty. If his court to the Queen was assiduous, his frankness to her was that of a true friend. No flattery is more bewitching than this. Occasionally he was forced to tell her what we should consider brutal truths, but he seems always to have uttered them in a manner which avoided offence. Even when urging her to ask Madame Walmoden, the King's German favourite, to England, he gave the unpalatable

advice with such businesslike frankness, that the Queen's wounded feelings as a wife were salved by the flattery to the soundness of her understanding as a woman. In all his dealings with the Queen, Walpole showed a dexterity which the most profound courtier—and this he certainly was not—might have envied. In talk, he was certainly not less broad than his contemporaries; but freedom of utterance was the fashion of the day. Lord Hervey composed a play for the amusement of the Queen, in which his own imaginary death was supposed to be under discussion at Court. Speeches were put into the mouth of the Queen and her ladies so coarse that they have been suppressed in the published copies of the play. Yet it was shown to the Queen and to the Princesses, and was thoroughly enjoyed by them. In palliation of the Queen's taste, it must not be forgotten that her conversation was mainly carried on in French, and that phrases in that elegant tongue have quite a different sound when translated into our crude vernacular.

George the First was obliged to

correspond with his Chancellor, Lord Cowper, in dog-Latin. It was their only language in common. George the Second spoke English correctly, but not easily. He found it difficult to pronounce the letters P and G. Two of his noted sayings were, "I hate all Boets and Bainters," and "I do love old Brentford: it reminds me so much of Yarmany." On the other hand, he wrote and spoke French with perfect facility and some elegance. At Court the ordinary conversation was carried on in that language. To some extent this accounts for the loose talk that habitually prevailed. Walpole was never accused of possessing much refinement or perfect taste; and just as his bulk and awkwardness rendered it difficult for him to kneel to the King, so his brutal frankness urged him to speak whatever passed through his mind to the Queen. She respected him for the defects of his qualities, and this respect, thanks to her efforts, the King himself came to feel for his Minister.

Walpole, though untainted by the philosophic atheism of Bolingbroke, was

not more orthodox than the majority of his contemporaries in political life. The spirit of the age was not religious. At the death of the Queen, some pious people found fault that no person had been sent for to pray with her, and Walpole in the ante-room to the death-chamber desired the Princess Emily to represent to the King that it would be well to summon the Archbishop of Canterbury for that purpose. The Princess having made some objection, Walpole in the presence of a dozen people, including some of those who had suggested this respectable course, burst out: "Pray, Madam, let this farce be played: the Archbishop will act it very well. You may bid him be as short as you will. It will do the Queen no hurt, no more than any good; and it will satisfy all the wise and good fools, who will call us all atheists if we don't pretend to be as great fools as they are."

Considering the occasion, the place, and the audience, candour of the kind, called *franchise brutal*, could scarcely go much further.

Walpole, as his official life approached

its termination, lost none of his political skill. He kept his head at the crisis of his fate, for fear lest he should lose it altogether from off his shoulders. One after another the men of talent had dropped into opposition.

Among the younger politicians Lyttelton and Pitt were pre-eminent for the vehemence of their language. Pulteney could be vehement too. He, a malcontent Whig, was the real leader of Opposition, notwithstanding the nominal leadership of the Tory Wyndham. Pulteney invariably sat on the Government bench, and often in close proximity to Sir Robert. Their intercourse was not unfriendly. When the critical division came, and Walpole, for the first time for twenty years, found himself in a minority, his habitual friendly chaff with Pulteney was useful to him. Warily the Minister planned his retirement. Secret terms were made by him with Pulteney and Carteret through the agency of Newcastle. He was to be unmolested out of office. There were to be no impeachments or imprisonings. In his fall he maintained the principles of

the new system of parliamentary government. For the first time, a fallen Minister was permitted to retire in security.

Bolingbroke had fled abroad in 1715. Harley in the same year had been sent to the Tower. Walpole, on the other hand, went quietly down to Houghton. No doubt there had been established a difference between the case of Walpole and that of his predecessors. Former Ministers had been rulers primarily in the interests of the King as well as in his name. Walpole, on the other hand, had for over twenty years governed with the assent and approval of a parliamentary majority, and primarily in the interests of a free Parliament. It would have been ridiculous to impeach him for acts the responsibility for which was shared by the representatives of the people. Certainly, the incongruity of the proceeding might not have preserved the fallen Minister, had he not secured himself by arrangement with the Opposition leaders from the malevolence of his political foes, inebriated as they were bound to be by their long-deferred triumph. An

attempt was made, as a matter of course, to obtain inquiry into his conduct with a view to his impeachment. It was supported by the more ardent spirits among his opponents, especially by Pitt and Cobham, whom he had dismissed from employment, and whose private advances he had rejected, in favour of those of his older and more tried adversaries. Pulteney and Carteret were staunch to their bargain, and Walpole was allowed to retire unmolested. The rump of his administration for a while continued to hold office under another name. Lord Wilmington, known as the Spencer Compton of earlier failures, became its nominal chief. Pelham and Newcastle, the Chancellor Hardwicke, and Harrington, remained in office. Carteret became Secretary of State. Pulteney, adhering to a declaration made in a rash moment to the effect that he would not accept office, became a member of the Cabinet without a department. Walpole favoured the appointment of Lord Wilmington to the Treasury, and his suggestion having been eagerly adopted by the King, was agreed to by

Pulteney. The Broad-bottomed Administration was in reality Walpole's government without Walpole. The real Opposition, Pitt, Lyttelton, and the four Grenvilles, were excluded from the King's service. Walpole's authority and influence with his master were unshaken. Had he not accepted the title of Lord Orford his authority in Parliament might have survived the shock of defeat, and might have revived under the reactionary influences provoked by Lord Wilmington's feebleness and Pulteney's perverse indolence. Walpole was not content with ensuring his safe retirement into the dignified obscurity of the House of Lords. At his secret instigation his old rival Pulteney shortly followed him, and became Earl of Bath. "Here we are, the two most insignificant fellows in England," was the encouraging greeting of Walpole on their first encounter in the lobbies of the House of Lords. The touch of public affairs kept by the fallen Minister was remarkable, although he was a great deal at Houghton, with Molly Skerret, who had now become his wife.

Once he broke the august silence of the House of Lords, and delivered after his old manner a speech worthy of the great Minister who had governed England for so long. His influence grew afresh as months rolled on. The death of Lord Wilmington in 1743 prepared the way for Pelham, who was again the nominee of Walpole.

Carteret's anger at being passed over in favour of so insignificant a rival provoked dissensions in the Cabinet which severely strained the bond of party government. Walpole came to the rescue of his nominee. Under his advice, constantly asked and given, the Pelhams stood firm. Every one who was in difficulty, from the Duke of Cumberland downwards, had recourse to the fallen Minister. It looked as if his return to place as well as to power was inevitable. The Fates decreed otherwise; and a cruel disease, painful and in those days incurable, intervened in the political struggle. On the 18th March 1745 at his house in Arlington Street, now marked with a commemorative tablet, Lord Orford died. Lord Shel-

burne said of him that he was, out of sight, the ablest man of his time, and the most capable. That he was a great Minister has never been seriously questioned. At a critical moment in the domestic history of the nation, his eminent practical qualities, characteristic of the race to which he belonged, served him and England in a manner which the loftiest philosophy or the most profound learning might have failed to do.

If the *axiomata media*, the middle generalisations of politics, are the essence of high statesmanship, Walpole was a great statesman as well as a great Minister. "By this time," wrote his son Horace to an intimate friend, "you have heard of my Lord's death: I fear it will have been a very great shock to you. I hope your brother will write you all the particulars; for my part, you can't expect I should enter into the details of it. His enemies pay him the compliment of saying, they do believe now that he did not plunder the public, as he was accused (as they accused him) of doing, he having died in such circumstances. If he had no proofs of his

honesty but this, I don't think this would be such indisputable authority: not leaving immense riches would be scanty evidence of his not having acquired them, there happening to be such a thing as spending them. It is certain, he is dead very poor: his debts with his legacies, which are trifling, amount to fifty thousand pounds. His estate, a nominal eight thousand a year, much mortgaged. In short, his fondness for Houghton has endangered Houghton. If he had not so overdone it, he might have left such an estate to his family as might have secured the glory of the place for many years: another such debt must expose it for sale. If he had lived, his unbounded generosity and contempt of money would have run him into vast difficulties. However irreparable his personal loss may be to his friends, he certainly died critically well for himself: he had lived to stand the rudest trials with honour, to see his character universally cleared, his enemies brought to infamy for their ignorance or villany, and the world allowing him to be the only man in England fit to be what he had been;

and he died at a time when his age and infirmities prevented his again undertaking the support of a government which engrossed his whole care, and which he foresaw was falling into the last confusion. In this I hope his judgment failed! His fortune attended him to the last; for he died of the most painful of all distempers, with little or no pain."

Though written with the bias of an affectionate son, this panegyric is not overstated. It has been said of Walpole that he was not a reformer or a successful war Minister, nor a profound and original thinker, nor even a tactician of great enterprise. Nor was he an orator of extraordinary brilliancy. But he possessed a power, which for practical value is worth more than these gifts. He was a politician of profound parliamentary capacity. It is a talent which never fails to obtain ascendency in the House of Commons. Orators, such as Charles Fox or Canning, Bolingbroke or Pulteney, may fail to obtain a definite hold over Parliament; but men of the stamp of Walpole are sure of success.

Walpole's claim to the gratitude of his countrymen is this; that in a homely common-sense fashion he grasped the full import of the revolutionary phase through which England was passing, and by moderation and good humour consolidated a revolution without a terror.

The Hanoverian succession, carrying with it the Protestant religion and parliamentary government, was but half established. To Walpole, to his twenty years of peaceful government, is due the final triumph, easily enough obtained, in 1745 of the principles of the Revolution, and the final disappearance along with Prince Charles Edward of Jacobite hopes.

Government by a Committee of the Privy Council, called a Cabinet, nominally the "King's Servants," really dependent not on the King's will, but upon maintaining a majority in the House of Commons to support the decrees of the Committee, had been conceived and established.

A system of combining popular influence and trained skill in government was the work of Walpole's official life.

A political philosopher or a patentee of constitutions might have failed to carry out so audacious an attempt. A jovial, coarse-minded, good-tempered country squire, lax in morals and devoid of principle, but with all the practical sense and everyday pluck of his race, succeeded, and left his achievement as the basis of the government of England to-day.

VII

THE APPEAL TO POPULAR OPINION

WALPOLE's place in English politics was not immediately filled. Even after his death, his influence remained for a while supreme. Queen Caroline's last expressed wish was to the effect that the King should be the special care of her favourite Minister. Both the King and Walpole had remembered the charge. Neither had deserted the other. To George the Second, a German by birth, training, and temperament, who may be said accidentally to have been King of England, is due from Englishmen a large measure of gratitude. Judged by modern ethical standards, as a man, he had faults; but as a sovereign he kept within the lines of the Constitution, and with great shrewdness he grasped and adhered to

the Whig maxims of constitutional government as understood by Walpole.

At the time of Walpole's death, the King was prepared to put aside personal predilections, and to abide by the plan of governing through a majority of the House of Commons, and by the Minister who commanded that majority. Undoubtedly he preferred Carteret to all competitors for office. Carteret was the most accomplished, the most capable of those who had served at one time or another with Walpole; just as Pulteney was the most eloquent and brilliant of the men looked upon as likely to command the confidence of the King. But eloquence, and even capacity, were not the main requisites in politicians desirous to govern. The primary necessity was now the confidence of the House of Commons; and there the Pelhams continued to hold their own. Henry Pelham, though peevish and irritable, possessed an inborn timidity and dread of giving offence which rendered him plausible in his dealings with men. He was supported by the immense borough influence of his elder brother, the Duke

of Newcastle. All this contributed to make his power in Parliament sufficient to defeat a combination of Carteret, Pulteney, and the Boy Patriots, the name given to that small knot of younger men which comprised in its ranks Henry Fox and William Pitt. Pelham's natural caution led him to be careful of rousing combined opposition. Acting on Walpole's advice he moved slowly, he marked time, and entered into no hasty engagements. With some show of skill, he played off against each other the rival ambitions of the younger men of talent whose eloquence and energy he dreaded. He was ready for any combination with the Whigs; but, acting on Walpole's advice, he avoided all correspondence with the Tories. "Whig it with all opponents that will parley, but 'ware Tory," had been the veteran statesman's warning to his pupil.

The lines of party government were to be strictly adhered to. An administration on a "broad bottom" might be safely formed, always provided that the planks were sawn from the old Whig

tree. There was to be no backsliding. Walpole's scheme of governing by means of a party majority in the House of Commons was not to be endangered; and events proved the plan had taken hold of Walpole's countrymen. Carteret's maxim, that "Give any man the Crown on his side and he can defy everything," was already found to be less than a half truth. The policy of Walpole had made deeper progress than was apparent to the most experienced politician. The King undoubtedly preferred the man whose talents he respected to the mediocrities whose influence in Parliament, apart from borough-mongering, seemed difficult to understand. A struggle between Carteret and the Pelhams, strong as were the King's inclinations to the brilliant Secretary of State who supported his Hanoverian policy, ended as Walpole must have wished it to end, in the triumph of party discipline and of the men who had the confidence of Parliament. Well might George the Second exclaim to his Chancellor, "Ministers are the king in this country." It has been said that Carteret, now be-

come Lord Granville, immeasurably superior as he was in genius to the Pelhams, sank down overpowered beneath their active, consistent, and decorous mediocrity.

If that is true, Lord Granville had no one to blame but himself. He had chances at least equal, if not superior, to those which the Pelhams or even Walpole had ever possessed; but the faults of his character, and his miscalculation of the relative forces of the Constitution, destroyed his chances. He chose to base his power chiefly on his influence over the mind of the King. He yielded to the King's wishes in foreign affairs. He was arrogant and reckless in his treatment of others. He showed himself unable to read the lesson of Walpole's long administration. He failed to comprehend the spirit of the age; and of all failures that is the most dismally fatal to an aspiring politician.

Arrogance might be tolerated in a Minister on certain conditions, but as yet those conditions were undeveloped in English political life, although the time was approaching when Chatham was to

show that they might have been foreseen by a statesman of keener political insight.

From Walpole's death in 1745, when the star of the Stuarts set for ever among the clouds of Culloden, to 1754, when Henry Pelham, followed his old chief, public life in England was singularly calm and languid. The temperate and peaceful disposition of the Minister seemed to pervade Parliament. At his death the King exclaimed: "Now I shall have no more peace"; and the words proved to be prophetic. Both in Parliament and in the country, as well as beyond its shores, the elements of discord were swiftly at war. Out of conflicting ambitions and widely divergent interests a new type of statesman, very different from Walpole, or from Bolingbroke, or from Pelham, or from the "hubble-bubble Newcastle," was destined to arise. And along with the new statesman a new force, of which he was in part the representative, in part the creator, was to be introduced into political life. This new force was the unrepresented voice of the people. The new statesman was an ex-cornet

of horse, William Pitt, better known as Lord Chatham.

The characteristics of William Pitt which mainly influenced his career were his ambition and his ill-health. Power, and that conspicuous form of egotism called personal glory, were the objects of his life. He pursued them with all the ardour of a strong-willed purpose; but the flesh was in his case painfully weak. Gout had declared itself his foe while he was still an Eton boy. His failures, and prolonged withdrawal at intervals from public affairs, were due to the inroads of this fatal enemy, from whom he was destined to receive his death-blow.

Walpole had not been slow to recognise the quality of this "terrible cornet of horse," as he called him. Walpole was no coward, and there is no indication that he feared his criticism, powerful as it was, as much as he mistrusted his proffered assistance when the end was at hand.

When it was a question of obtaining immunity from prosecution, and securing upon a safe and reasonable basis

the retirement of a fallen Minister, Walpole turned away from William Pitt and the "boy patriots" to Pulteney and Carteret.

Of William Pitt's character he could have known little. He knew him as a rhetorician of extraordinary force, and as a rhetorician he probably distrusted him. Possibly he may have been right. William Pitt had not then adopted clearly the pose which, after the manner of rhetoricians, he meant definitely to assume. Later on this became manifest to the world. He was largely influenced in his choice of a part by the character of his only possible rival, Henry Fox; a man as unscrupulous as he was talented. In Fox to a love of intrigue was added a passion for money. His ambition was not so much to be powerful as to be wealthy. William Pitt gauged at its right value the newly awakening sense of probity in the mind of parliamentary majorities and of the men who, if they did not themselves govern, influenced widely those to whom government was entrusted. As Paymaster of the Forces, one of the earliest offices held

by him, he had ample opportunities for amassing a fortune.

Henry Fox, who had held the same office, did avail himself of them when his opportunities arose. William Pitt, with masterly shrewdness, refused to supplement his salary by any sum, whether offered as commission by foreign princes receiving subsidies from England, or obtained by way of interest upon public monies for a while in his hands. Both these methods had, up to that time, been considered legitimate by other holders of the office.

William Pitt was known to be a poor man. His fortune consisted of little beyond the ten thousand pounds which the old Duchess of Marlborough, with characteristic malignity, in appreciation of his denunciations of Walpole, had bequeathed to him. Money, however, was not the object of the ex-cornet. Poverty was no obstacle to his ambition. That fact he recognised. He elected, therefore, to remain poor, and utilised his poverty as a stepping-stone to power. There were other and greater obstacles in his path. Prejudice on the

part of the King he was aware had to be overcome. He had rashly offended George the Second by his outspoken condemnation of what was called the Hanoverian policy. This prejudice might be grappled with, and he determined to overcome it; but loss of reputation for public virtue of a stamp superior to that of his contemporaries, would have been to him a loss of one of the chief weapons with which he resolved to fight his way. He gloried in the name of patriot. With that facility peculiar to rhetoricians of supreme force, he had come to believe in his own striking images, in his own grandiloquence; so that it matters little to us now whether or no, in the beginning, William Pitt was animated by singleminded love of his country. It would be a labour of feminine supererogation to inquire whether he did not, as life wore on, turn his back upon many of the professions of his youth; whether, after stormily denouncing the "Hanoverian policy," he did not eventually out-Hanover King George; whether, a bitter

opponent of standing armies in times of peace, he was not responsible himself for maintaining an army more powerful than any which under similar circumstances had been allowed by Parliament.

William Pitt possessed not only that most valuable gift in a politician, which enabled him to persuade his hearers of the justice of the cause he was advocating at the moment, but also the self-persuasiveness which made him credit to the full his own argument, and that magic ascendency of words which carried to the conviction of his audience a sense of the absolute integrity of the orator.

Although at given moments in a nation's history—in 1757, for example, when, through the agency of this very statesman, England was raised from humiliation to the loftiest pinnacle of glory—such political gifts are of inestimable value to statesmanship, on the whole it may be doubted whether any nation is to be congratulated, whose destinies are placed in the hands of a master of the art of rhetoric.

William Pitt's splendour in the eyes of his countrymen is the splendour of

an antique torso, or of a fragment of Sophocles. We have no glimpse of him in all his glory. As an orator he was supreme in his generation; and if oratory is to be judged by the effect produced upon an audience, he stands among the greatest masters of the art. But the reports of his speeches are not only meagre; they are untrustworthy, and with the exception of an image or a phrase here and there, none of his speeches, as we read them, are genuine.

As a statesman his work was also fragmentary, if it is estimated by results tangible and visible at the present time. His genius was mainly stimulative and inspiring. He drew together the hostile elements of Scottish and English character, facilitating the final labour of Sir Walter Scott. He introduced into England a new political rôle: that of the popular courtier. It was an inspiration. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that he invented "the people." On one occasion in a discussion with the King he appealed to the opinion of the House of Commons. "You have taught me," replied George

the Second, "to look for the sense of my people in other places than the House of Commons." Pitt however did not condescend, as a weaker man might have done, to flatter the sovereignty he had created. His courtiership was more subtle, and at the same time certainly more respectable.

He posed as the epitome of all the virtues, private and public. Avaricious he was not, but he went farther than prudence enjoined in his public contempt for money. Patriotic he certainly was; yet in early life, in the case of the Spanish war, and in the case of the American war towards the end of his career, his reading of patriotism led him into bombast which was distinctly harmful to the nation.

He was aware that in order to lead the "people" a man must rouse their interest and if possible their curiosity about himself. He neither cut off his dog's tail like Alcibiades, nor ran naked through the Park like Bolingbroke; but his odd habits of isolation, his haughty demeanour with equals and superiors, inflamed the imagination of those to whom he was personally unknown.

Of friendship he was—like most demagogues—altogether incapable. His personal following was never large. He appealed for support, he looked for power, not to the devotion of adherents, nor to the fidelity of friends, but to the masses upon whose passions he was conscious of being, by his gift of speech, able to play. This power, for some years, he believed himself to possess without limit. In his attacks upon Walpole, in his denunciations of Carteret, in his rivalry with Fox, and in his attempts to destroy Newcastle, he credited himself with the possession of weapons which would enable him to conquer all opponents, and assist him to the highest offices of State.

For a while Pitt clearly believed, with the faith of a young man in ideas, that by means of popular favour he could force himself into the councils of the King. In this he was mistaken. He no sooner discovered his error than with shrewd sense he hastened to repair it. He never allowed temper to stand in the way of an object he had in view. His great offence in the King's eyes was the relation in which he stood to the heir to

the throne. He gave up his place in the household of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and thus removed the chief source of his offending. His language, rash and bitter as it seemed to the King, he could not with due regard to his self-respect withdraw or recant; but he could pay court to Lady Yarmouth, the King's mistress, and this simple expedient he did not neglect to adopt. His claims, based on the popular support which his adhesion would bring to the Government, were strongly urged upon George the Second by Newcastle.

The year 1756 was disastrous to England. In Europe the loss of Minorca, in America the successes of Montcalm, and in India the tragedy enacted at Calcutta by Surajah Dowlah, had depressed and exasperated the English people. To the weakness and incompetence of the Government these reverses were, as is usually the case, attributed.

It was felt that a strong hand was required at the helm. The eyes of all men were directed towards Pitt.

When Henry Fox deserted the Government, and when his desertion

was followed by that of Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield, who insisted on his right to the Chief Justiceship of England, then become vacant, Newcastle became aware that his nominal majority in the House of Commons could not save him from giving way to the pressure of public opinion outside Westminster. His resignation followed, and the Duke of Devonshire's short-lived government was formed, with Pitt as Secretary of State. But Pitt's old enemy, the gout, intervened, and without his constant support, nothing could save an administration in all other respects so inherently weak. In April 1757 the King's dislike to Pitt and Temple, and the extensive borough influence of Newcastle, were fatal to the Duke of Devonshire. The fortunes of England seemed at a low ebb. Beset by foes in all quarters of the world, the nation was torn by internal dissensions which made both the maintenance of one set of Ministers, or the choice of another, alike impossible. It was not until June 1757 that the Devonshire government, dismissed in April, was replaced by a coalition, the

fame of which, if glory counts as solid fame, is for ever stamped with the name of William Pitt. Of this coalition he was the soul. At home and abroad he was looked upon as the moving spirit of the Administration. Newcastle was its nominal head. His majority had been "borrowed," as Pitt said, to carry on the Government. Newcastle, on the other hand, had "borrowed" the popularity of Pitt with the nation at large, to make government possible. Each had come to learn the uses of the other. Pitt, a younger man, took longer to grasp the necessities of his position. He had overrated the power of the people, as yet unorganised, and had undervalued both the long-established authority of the Monarch and the weight of territorial influence. Once the conditions under which alone power could be wielded were clear to him, he hesitated no longer, and accepted the coalition with Newcastle.

One of the drawbacks to exuberant rhetorical gifts is that the orator invariably yields to the temptation to lay down general propositions and to enunciate

principles which are beyond the immediate practical necessities of politics, and sometimes become seriously embarrassing in subsequent days.

Pitt was not free from this weakness. His attacks upon Newcastle, his attempts to drive him from power, based on reasons altogether outside the acts of that Minister, were now to recoil upon himself. His denunciations of unnatural coalitions in general, when he had in view merely the particular coalition of Newcastle and Fox, were now to be recalled in his disfavour. Fortunately his haughty disregard of the views of others rendered him contemptuous of criticism. His proud self-reliance, his intimate conviction that he only could save the country, gave him the requisite force which belief in his star gave Napoleon. This strong conviction his rhetorical gifts enabled him to extend to the nation. Nothing was refused to the new War Minister. The apparently monstrous coalition between Newcastle and his bitterest political opponent was accepted by the people in face of their emergency, just as the service of the

man who had insulted him was accepted by the King.

"Deserve my confidence and you shall have it," was the reply of George the Second to his new Secretary of State when the latter, with almost servile deference, approached him for the first time. The confidence of the nation he already possessed. Oddly enough, the most vehement denouncers of rank and privilege can be humble courtiers in the presence of royalty. It was noticed of William Pitt that he could bend his back abnormally low. So much so that at the levée, when he bowed to the Monarch, his hooked nose could be seen between his legs. At a kind word from George the Third, a mere lad, the great commoner was noticed to be visibly affected. These traits were curious in a man so stiff and proud, that his under-secretaries were never permitted to sit in his presence.

In three years, by good management, supplemented by good fortune, the position of England was entirely changed. Every morning news of a fresh victory arrived. Pitt obtained the credit for

every success won by British arms. He deserved much of it. His imperious will had overcome the great and permanent obstacles to British success in war, the niggardliness and procrastination of officialism.

Like Napoleon, he understood the vital importance of rapid military movements. When Anson used the word impossible in reply to an urgent demand for ships, Pitt declared he would impeach the First Lord of the Admiralty in Parliament, and proposed immediately to lay the matter before the King. The threat sufficed. Pitt, unlike his predecessors and his successors, was aware of the futility of attempting to conduct a great war without free expenditure of money. If a general asked for troops, he gave him twice as many as he asked for; and he never allowed any consideration of expense to stand in the way of sending reinforcements or of perfecting an expedition.

He boldly exaggerated rather than minimised the cost of war. He pretended to know nothing of finance. He was responsible for the conduct of

the war. If the Treasury raised difficulties, he haughtily ignored them. Either the money must be produced or he must cease to be charged with the policy. "He disdained," says Horace Walpole, "to descend into the operations of an office he did not fill; he affected to throw on the Treasury the execution of measures he dictated. Secluded from all eyes his orders were received as oracles." He never shrank from defending his demands in Parliament. By speeches of consummate power he obtained the approbation of the House of Commons for his policy, and for the methods by which he enforced it.

The power he wielded was of a kind most dangerous to the welfare of nations. He appealed to the lust for military glory, and there are few passions more fatal to national wellbeing. His appeal was made by means of unrivalled rhetoric, an art than which none is more dangerous to national liberty.

Fortunately perhaps for England, William Pitt lived before the government of the country had ceased to be aristocratic. In this fact lay the limita-

tions of his influence. A rhetorician's power, resting upon the people, has only full scope under democratic forms of government. It is idle speculation to try and cast the horoscope of Pitt under conditions more favourable to his dominion. As it was, his authority ceased with the new reign in 1760, and although his influence was exercised at times upon public affairs, during the seventeen years which elapsed between the accession of George the Third and his own death, the great commoner, become Earl of Chatham, was merely a shadow of his former self.

In 1760 his main work in the world had been accomplished. In order to redress the balance of political power he had called into being public opinion in England, and he had become the father of a son to whom he gave his own name, whose share of fame was to equal, if not surpass his own.

It has been pointed out that the most remarkable characteristic of his home policy was the great prominence he gave to the moral side of legislation, or, in other words, the skill with which he

acted on the higher enthusiasms of the people. His example has been followed by his successors in ambition. What was then a novel and noble departure in politics, has since become a commonplace of political warfare.

Chatham's example has been extensively imitated. That he did much to raise what is called the moral tone of political life no one can doubt. His ostentatious purity in an age of corruption, his unimpeachable private character, his freedom from nepotism, his appeals to the spirit of self-sacrifice in his countrymen, his imperial conceptions, all helped to elevate politics and political character in the eyes of the people.

After the birth of his second son, and his fall from power, his life was singularly retired. Even when his second administration was formed, his seclusion was scarcely disturbed. Gout hardly left him sane; but in the intervals of pain and depression, his chief contribution to the bettering of his country was the education and training of his son. The feebleness of the Grenvilles, the American troubles, the struggle with

the revolted colonies, roused flashes of the old spirit; but they were a mere flicker of the fiery soul that was slowly passing away. Not even the responsibilities of office could rouse him. His second administration contributed nothing solid towards the progress or glory of England. To the end however, to the hour when in the House of Lords he fell back fainting into the arms of the young William Pitt, Lord Chatham retained his large trust in the people, and remained their special representative in the councils of the nation.

His legacy to his country was rich. He fashioned the mind of the lad who was to stand with Chatham's unimpeachable character, with Chatham's purity from sordid interests, with Chatham's proud and haughty disregard of clamour, with Chatham's loyalty of purpose and indomitable courage, if without Chatham's good fortune, as the defender of the liberties of England, and the champion of the freedom of Europe.

Chatham was no sooner laid in West-

minster Abbey than there arose on the political horizon the charming figure of his son, William Pitt, a mere boy in appearance and years, but trained in eloquence, in political resolution, and in the craft of statesmanship by a master hand; and it seemed to those who had admired and feared the father, quite simple and reasonable that the fortunes of England should be entrusted to the son.

VIII

THE BIRTH OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

For a hundred years with scarcely an interlude the government of England had been vested in the great Revolution families which constituted the Whig party. Their domination was at last to come to an end. Chatham's appeals to popular opinion, to the unrepresented forces of the nation, had shaken the monopoly of the Whigs. It began to be felt that there were Englishmen, educated, competent, with liberal ideas, having a stake in the country, who were not connected by blood or marriage with the political hierarchy. The most prominent and most famous of these men who held Whig doctrines but were not of the Whig party, was Edmund

Burke. The only Englishman who in the last century rivalled Burke in knowledge and general powers of mind was Dr. Johnson, and his Toryism was of that unreasoning sort which alone made Toryism possible to so shrewd an observer. Edmund Burke, on the other hand, laid the foundation in political literature of the doctrines which have since become the commonplaces of Liberal writers and speakers. Burke as private secretary to Lord Rockingham was as curiously misplaced as was Swift in a similar capacity to Lord Temple. Excellent and worthy were the Rockingham Whigs, but the far-reaching mind of Burke was altogether beyond their range. Place and power they understood. For the good of the country it seemed eminently right and proper that they should be in office. The contention appeared not unreasonable, since for nearly a century the Whigs had ruled England, carrying on a passive warfare against the power of the Crown. The Revolution of 1688 had finally established the Protestant religion and the dominion of the Whig oligarchy. As

though some magic lay[1] in the eighth decade of the centuries, in 1784 a new power came into existence, and the Whig dominion ended. This new power was that of the Liberal party; a political combination framed upon distinctly novel lines, and based upon ideas which appeared strange and new to the older Whigs. Of this party the younger Pitt was the parent. Its sponsor was Edmund Burke.

Two principal causes contributed to the fall of the Whigs:—First, their overbearing demeanour, which roused the hostility of George the Third, who from his early youth had resented the strong curb which these haughty oligarchs had used with no light hand. The King chafed under the rule of the old Revolution families, who, it must be admitted, made no attempt to conceal their consciousness of dominion.

When discussing his iniquitous coalition with Lord North, Mr. Fox laid special stress on the necessity of not suffering the King to be his own Minister; for Lord North's easy-going nature

[1] See Note in Appendix.

had yielded too much to the royal will. No one was better aware of the fact than Lord North himself. "The King ought to be treated with all sort of respect and attention," he said to Mr. Fox, "but the appearance of power is all that a king of this country can have." The Whigs hardly cared to leave an appearance of power to the King, and their confidence in their own strength emboldened them to neglect the soothing of royal susceptibilities. George the Third became their implacable foe, and his enmity, as experience showed, could not be prudently incurred. When Lord North fell from power Mr. Fox openly treated the success of himself and his friends as a victory over the King. The list of the new Cabinet was submitted to a meeting of the Whig party before it was approved by the Sovereign—an unmannerly proceeding, altogether inconsistent with the maintenance of respect to the monarchy. No opportunity was lost of bringing home to George the Third the fact that the Whigs had got him down and meant to keep him under their control.

His threats to retire to Hanover show the state of mind to which these tactics had reduced him. His natural shrewdness and the clever coolness of his advisers triumphed over his display of temper. He remained to take his revenge, to accept passively the Rockingham Government which he abhorred, and to set its members by the ears; to destroy the confidence of the leaders of the party in each other, and the confidence of the country in the Whig party.

If during Lord Rockingham's fatal illness George the Third never once sent to inquire after his Prime Minister's health, this neglect of the ordinary decencies of society had no ulterior consequences; but the ill-feeling excited and carefully fanned by the King between Mr. Fox and Lord Shelburne, his open preference for the latter, and his choice of him, rather than Mr. Fox, for Lord Rockingham's successor, indirectly gave the *coup de grâce* to the Whig party.

When Lord Shelburne became Minister, he was deserted at once by Fox,

Lord John Cavendish, Burke, and Sheridan. This schism was fatal to the schismatics and to their political connection. Shelburne retained, however, the support of the Duke of Richmond, of Lord Keppel, and of General Conway. A more efficient ally than these he obtained, by offering to the young William Pitt, then only twenty-three years of age, the high office of Chancellor of the Exchequer and the leadership of the House of Commons. The offer was accepted, and Mr. Pitt took at once that lofty position in the eyes of his countrymen from which he was never dislodged.

The second and final cause which led to the overthrow of the Whig party was the personal character of its leader, Charles James Fox. From early youth Charles Fox had been spoilt. Adored by his father, he was indulged in every whim and encouraged in every extravagance. Henry Fox was not only devoid of high principle, but had evolved a code of ethics of his own, with selections from which he adorned his letters to his son. As a

boy at Eton, Charles Fox was incited by his father to conduct which left a mark upon the lad for life, and distinctly, it is recorded, changed the tone of the school. Before he was of age he had taken his seat in Parliament. Before his twenty-first birthday was a week old, he was already one of the first of parliamentary debaters, and as notorious a gambler as could be found at Almack's. The young men who attended that club, just then eclipsing Brooks' and White's, lost ten or fifteen thousand pounds of an evening. As much as a hundred thousand pounds in gold was at one time noted on the table. Lord Stavordale, son of Stephen Fox, lost £11,000, and having won it all back in one great hand at hazard, exclaimed with an oath: "If I had been playing *deep* I might have won millions." This promising youth, cousin of Charles Fox, was not yet of age. The debts incurred by these young men were enormous. Charles Fox owed a fortune besides the losses which he had paid. He borrowed from usurers and friends alike. He never counted the cost to

himself or to them. He would sit all night at a faro table, with a leather apron over his knees, leather cuffs to protect his ruffles, a frieze coat, turned inside out for luck, a shade over his eyes, and a high-crowned hat garlanded with flowers on his head. Some of his companions wore masks to conceal the play of their features agitated by the chances of "Quinze."

It was strange preparation for the solid business of life. It was strange training for one whose competitor in the race was the son of Chatham, endowed with not less than Chatham's powers.

It was after such a night that Horace Walpole heard the young orator for the first time, having made a special expedition to the House of Commons for the purpose, and came away amazed at his common-sense, and his unrivalled clearness and force in putting his case. "How such talents make one laugh at Tully's rules for an orator, and his indefatigable application. His laboured orations are puerile, compared with this boy's manly reason." It was after such

a night that Gibbon noted, with a touch of sarcasm, his eloquent periods in defence of the Church of England, and of enforced subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. It was after such a night that years later a friend, calling on him at his lodgings, found the ante-room full of creditors, and Mr. Fox lying on the hearthrug in his nightshirt, open at the throat, reading Virgil, careless alike of his own troubles and those of mankind.

His good temper, his good sense, his kindness of heart, his warm friendship, his love of children, his fine scholarship, his brilliant gift of utterance, were the admiration of his contemporaries—"Charles," as he was affectionately called by his friends, by his opponents, and by the mob, could excite no animosities. His virulent attacks upon Lord North could never rouse that Minister to anger. Mr. Fox lived and died beloved by all who came within the magic circle of his personality, and admired by thousands who had never heard his voice. After his death, even to the present day, a somewhat idealised

picture of him, drawn by affectionate hands, has been passed down from the circle at Holland House, to a posterity still under the wand of the magician.

Yet in spite of all this love and admiration, in spite of the halo about his memory, Mr. Fox's character was deeply corrupted by the habits of his youth—habits which had stripped him of moral sense, and had rendered him callous to the stings of honourable obligation and cold to the loftiest interests of his country. He could be carelessly generous, and just without an effort. He could be roused to spasmodic indignation by the real or imaginary wrongs of others. He could, with pitiless humour, tear away the mask from cant or hypocrisy. He could charm friend and foe by his kindly smile. These virtues came easy to him. At the crisis of his career, however, his want of principle, his loose easy-going habits of thought, his indifference to public virtue, led him to choose a path which destroyed his influence for ever with his countrymen, and rendered his whole political life barren of results. More than any man

he was responsible for destroying the Government of Lord North. He was pledged to the colleagues who served with him under Lord Rockingham. At the death of this nobleman he put forward the ridiculous pretensions of the Duke of Portland, as the man "wanted by the country"; and on the pretext that the King had overruled the public wishes, by the selection of Lord Shelburne, he resigned office and carried with him as many of his friends as he could induce to follow him. Nothing could have showed a more childish want of a sense of responsibility. Had he stood aloof then from other combinations some defence might be made for his conduct, animated as he certainly was by distrust, as well as by jealousy, of Shelburne. His alliance with Lord North, whom he had denounced for years as a politician, and whose policy he had spent his life in opposing, makes defence impossible; and his coalition with that statesman for the purpose of taking office was rightly understood and never forgiven by the nation he aspired to govern. Mr. Pitt declared publicly

that he could not sit in a Cabinet with Lord North, and he gave as his reason his opinion that the one virtue of the late Parliament was the vote by which it had "put an end to Lord North's Administration, and to the calamitous and ruinous war which he had brought upon the country."

This opinion had always been that expressed in vehement language by Mr. Fox; and it is impossible to explain adequately the grounds of his decision to become the colleague of Lord North. When Mr. Fox met that Minister for the purpose of arranging the terms of their union, he expressed a hope that their administration would be "founded on mutual goodwill and confidence"—words which certainly could have meant very little, and should have had no meaning whatever in the mouth of one of these men addressing the other. Mr. Fox, whose reasoning powers were clear and vigorous beyond those of ordinary men, would have been among the first to see the incongruity of this alliance had his moral standpoint resembled that of Mr. Pitt. Over him the

moral sense had ceased to exercise control.

Whether the King was right or wrong in believing, as he did, that Mr. Fox had alienated the Prince of Wales' affections from him, and corrupted his principles, no justification can be offered for the intimacy between the two men on the footing upon which it was placed by Mr. Fox. At the time of Lord Rockingham's death when Fox was nominally Secretary of State, and in reality the head of the Government, the Prince of Wales was only twenty years of age. His affection for Mr. Fox was not surprising. He had yielded to the fascinations which had conquered so many. Mr. Fox's opportunity was a great one. Under his hand was the character of the youth who it seemed before long must be invested with all the responsibilities of kingship. Without priggish interference, which must have lost him a friend, he might have used the confidence and warm heart of the Prince to draw him into the paths of reason, if not of virtue. It seems, however, clear that Mr. Fox, if he did not encourage, at least abetted the

Prince of Wales in all his follies and extravagance; and he certainly smiled at his rebelliousness to his father and at that disregard of all the decencies of life which has left a stain upon the character of George the Fourth. Had Mr. Fox still retained a trace of principle, his friendship with the Prince of Wales would have been conducted on very different lines, and would have borne very different fruit. Against a man so gifted it is just to score his sins of omission as well as those of commission. He was by many years the older man. And if he could not appreciate to what extent age is for youth a natural priesthood, Mr. Fox, in addition to the natural claims upon him, was imbued with classical literature, and perfectly familiar with all the maxims with which it teems relative to the duties, moral and political, of friendship. In this case patriotism, apart from all other sentiments, demanded care and devotion in the development of the character of the young man in whose hands so much influence and power was to rest.

Even though he could forget the

majestas pueritiae which attaches to the glory of the purple in every case, it is incredible that a statesman, perspicuous and experienced, should have failed to appreciate the degree of ill service he was rendering to his country by encouraging the vices of her future king, as well as the load of difficulties he was possibly helping to accumulate for himself, or for his ministerial successors. No man ever had a fairer opportunity of influencing another for good. Prince George was in the heyday of his youth. His beauty and perfect manners rendered him more than attractive. His powers of mind were not of a mean order. He was completely charmed by the superior powers of Mr. Fox. Yet the older man could apparently take no loftier view of friendship and of political opportunity than to minister to the passions and pander to the vices of the younger.

His favourite Virgil must frequently have reminded him that there are higher aims than these in affectionate intercourse between man and man. Yet there is no record that he was ever haunted by remorse, or fearful of the

regrets which time would bring; or that for him—the politician, the statesman, the professed patriot—a day might come when he might vainly wish that he had established an influence over Prince George of a very different kind:

> magno cum optaverit emptum
> intactum Pallanta.

This may seem sufficiently condemnatory of Mr. Fox, but his moral weakness took a more fatal shape in the inability which he showed to grasp the real nature of the struggle between this country and Napoleon. He was blinded by political dust to the true character of Mr. Pitt's struggle, and he permitted himself to be fascinated by the brilliant figure of the First Consul. While it is the failing of some minds to see too clearly the merits of a political adversary, and too dimly those of political friends, it is a crime to extend this liberality of view to the enemies of your country and your race. Fortunately there was nothing mean or petty about Mr. Fox. Otherwise the sentiment which prompted him to express his hope that failure would

attend British troops engaged against those of France, might have induced him to contribute surreptitiously to their defeat. He was not base enough to be a traitor, although he "thought meanly" of his countrymen at a time when they were exhibiting those great qualities of dogged resistance to tyranny which have made England the home of freedom.

It was this moral blindness in Mr. Fox which led to his destruction as a political force. It lost him the friendship and support of Edmund Burke; it alienated from him the clearer headed Whigs; it reduced his following to the occupants of one hackney coach; it contributed to the security of Mr. Pitt's Government; it sapped the last foundations of Whig influence in the country; and led to the final disruption of the Whig party.

When Mr. Pepper Arden in 1783, on the fall of the coalition, rose in his place to move for a new writ for Appleby for the election of a member in the place of Mr. William Pitt, who had accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury, a shout of

derisive laughter went up from the benches crowded with followers of Lord North and Mr. Fox. Yet it was no laughing matter. The "raw boy" about to take office was to continue to hold it for twenty years, and the party based on his principles, reared by his policy, and cemented by his example, was to guide the destinies of England for a century.

Mr. Pitt's education and training had been wholly different from those of Mr. Fox, and their characters were quite as dissimilar. George Selwyn compared them to the two well-known apprentices whose careers have formed the basis of many a contrast.

Chatham, altogether at his best within the domestic circle, would spend many hours charmed and happy in the society of the "young counsellor," as he called his boy. At his father's knee Mr. Pitt practised the rolling periods, and exercised the wonderful memory, that from the day he first spoke within its walls dominated the House of Commons. The lofty patriotism, the haughty disinterestedness, and the indomitable courage of Chatham were transmitted to his son.

His father's fire Mr. Pitt never caught. His manner was ever cold and serene. To a lofty imagination there is an indescribable charm in watching the first soaring of youth, and in training its early flights. Chatham delighted in these exercises, as his letters to his son, as well as to his nephew, amply show. His careful pruning of the mind of Mr. Pitt was his great legacy to his country. When he fell back into his son's arms in the House of Lords, on the occasion of his last speech within those walls, he typified, so to speak, the land he was about to leave, and unwittingly designated the hands to which he committed that great trust. Such confidence, if indeed he felt it, was not misplaced; for Mr. Pitt possessed all the qualities then needed in the ruler of England and in the founder of a new school of statesmen.

His personal character was above reproach or even suspicion. Gambling, after a short experience, he had quietly abandoned after noting its fascinations. His name was never coupled with that of any woman. His virtue was a constant source of raillery among the young

Macaronis of Brooks' and of White's. Rarer at that time than these qualities was his perfect disinterestedness with regard to money. Like Pericles, Mr. Pitt was poor; and, like his great prototype, his poverty never tempted him to accept a lucrative sinecure, nor was he ever suspected of a desire to profit financially by the high offices which he held. As Chancellor of the Exchequer his duty appeared to him rigidly to guard the public purse from encroachment, and he was as close-fisted when his own claims were considered as when those of others were concerned. Not the oldest and driest Treasury clerk in these days could be more conscientiously penurious with public funds. "Amid the losses of the Empire the old corrupt practices had flourished unchecked," if they had not increased, under the indolent and easy-going Lord North.

"Mr. Pitt, with a vigorous hand, pruned the luxuriance of prodigality, and grafted on the ancient system the new maxims he had learnt in the school of Adam Smith." This view of Mr. Pitt's financial administration, in the words of

a Liberal Prime Minister of later days, justifies his claim to be the first of English statesmen who made Retrenchment, as it is understood by us now, a cardinal point of his policy. Mr. Pitt's perfect education had made him familiar with the writings of Adam Smith. Perhaps alone among the members of the House of Commons elected in 1784 he was imbued with the commercial doctrines of the founder of Free Trade, which had been given to the world, by the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*, less than ten years before Mr. Pitt entered Parliament. As a financier he remained, throughout his life, a disciple of Adam Smith. As a financier his reputation stood as high above those of his contemporaries as Mr. Gladstone's stands above those of his. In finance Mr. Pitt contemplated wider changes, in the direction of absolute commercial freedom, than have even now been attained. He desired to abolish all Custom Duties whatever, and limit the public income to internal taxation. In 1792 he proposed his Sinking Fund Scheme. It was the commencement of

a new era in finance. Unfortunately the war which almost immediately broke out made all reform impossible, and postponed for half a century the realisation of Mr. Pitt's dreams.

That Mr. Pitt was a peace Minister, and was drawn reluctantly into the great war by the passions of his countrymen, and by the real exigencies of the case, no one free from prejudice has ever disputed.

It has often seemed the cruel fate of Ministers really loving peace, or professing to love it, to attract the clouds of war. As a war Minister, although his constancy and courage are not to be measured by his unsuccess, Mr. Pitt cannot stand comparison with Chatham. As a war Minister he was heavily weighed down by his financial keenness. Chatham pretended to know nothing of finance. He was ostentatiously lavish in war. It is the secret of success. Mr. Pitt tried hard and conscientiously to make cheap wars. Subsidies appealed to his Exchequer mind. The amount of a subsidy could be estimated, and its cost provided for by anticipation. It fitted well with the calculations so dear to the

soul of a Chancellor of the Exchequer; whereas war, on a great scale, necessarily opened incalculably the mouth of the public purse. Mr. Pitt's preference was natural, and his example has been a temptation rather than a warning to his successors.

First among English statesmen Mr. Pitt showed zeal for parliamentary reform. One of his first acts in public life was to endeavour to convince the House of Commons that it was necessary to enfranchise the great unrepresented towns which had arisen in the centre of England. As Prime Minister in 1785 he renewed his attempt, and the European cataclysm alone prevented him from continuing his struggle for reform. He had all the hatred of revolution, and all the love for reform, so characteristic of the Liberal chiefs of 1830.

To Edmund Burke, as well as to Adam Smith, he owed a large mental debt. He attempted to grapple with Irish discontent, and to draw Ireland and England into closer harmony. Whatever opinion may be held about the methods used, it is fatuous to deny that Mr. Pitt's policy

was a great conception, based on the noblest principle, and altogether in keeping with the opinions and ideas of Liberal statesmen who succeeded him. To unite England and Ireland in one scheme of representative government, on a broad and generous basis, and to combine with this union freedom from religious disabilities, by admitting Catholics to full citizenship, was the great policy of Mr. Pitt. It was defeated by the bigotry of English Protestantism acting upon the narrow conscience of the King. In conjunction with his friend Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt conceived and advocated another great measure, the Abolition of Slavery in British dominions, which was left to the Liberal party ultimately to accomplish. Under the trees at Holwood this noble piece of work was first discussed by the two friends, and the first plans of the campaign organised.

Another innovation made by Mr. Pitt, which has had a marked influence upon English public life, was the infusion into the House of Lords of democratic blood. Up to the reign of George the Third the House of Peers consisted of

less than half its present numbers. Occasionally a new peer was created; but he was generally a member of some aristocratic family, and his peerage was a mere step in nobility. Mr. Pitt conceived the plan of strengthening the hold of the hereditary house upon the country by letting it be seen that every man carried potentially a coronet under his hat. It is difficult to estimate the importance to the stability of English institutions in their present form, of the novel practice which has more than doubled the numbers of the House of Lords.

Finally, Mr. Pitt, with the courage and haughty indifference of youthful genius, broke away from the trammels of old political "connections." He would not stoop to traffic with boroughmongers and political patrons. In the session of 1783 he stood alone in the House of Commons. The "raw boy" of four-and-twenty was Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, without a single colleague of the rank of a Cabinet Minister to support him in the House of Commons, and with a large hostile majority to face. He suffered

defeat after defeat, waiting patiently for the turn of the tide, which he felt quietly confident would come. What was the tide for which he waited? It was the flow of popular opinion, to which Chatham had so often appealed, upon which his son now relied, and upon which he did not rely in vain. The General Election of 1784 decided the great issue raised by this lad—a boy in years, but in intellectual training, and in composure, and in dignity, more than a match for the most experienced politicians. For the remainder of his life, with the exception of the three years during which he tolerated and patronised the effete administration of Addington, he was Prime Minister. During the whole of his career, to his death in 1806, he remained the real ruler of England.

'Education and training had made of him a reformer: a zealous advocate of Peace, of Retrenchment, of Reform. Fatality made of him a warrior. In the eyes of his countrymen, and in the opinion of the whole world, he stood upright among cringing statesmen and toppling thrones as the defender of the

integrity of England, and of the liberties of Europe; but in his youth—before the great Revolution by its reactionary waves had made war a necessity of self-defence, and conservatism a necessity of temporary security—Mr. Pitt had laid the foundations of the Liberal party, and had struck the keynote of a century of political progress.

Few English statesmen have been tested so severely as Mr. Pitt by the trials and temptations incidental to public life. None have stood the test more superbly well. To none is the debt of gratitude due from Englishmen, living to-day, so heavy. He exhibited to Europe the spectacle of a nation ready to bear the most terrible hardships, and to make the most heroic sacrifices, rather than yield to the dominion, or connive at the oppressive schemes, of an ambitious military tyrant, however formidable the one or however specious the other. His character acted like a tonic upon that of his countrymen; and the national fibre was strengthened by contact with his firm will and indomitable courage.

In 1806, when death came to him, the great struggle with Napoleon was un-

ended. He left his country, as he feared, among the breakers. The pilot had gone overboard, and the storm was far from weathered. In point of fact the clouds were about to lift. Three years afterwards, Sir Arthur Wellesley commenced his immortal defence of Portugal; and the tide of victory, for which Mr. Pitt had so ardently longed, commenced to flow from the heights of Torres Vedras, and rapidly spreading over France itself, swept Napoleon from the Imperial throne of Europe.

Mr. Pitt's political rival soon followed him to the grave. During his short spell of power Mr. Fox found himself in the humiliating position of having to carry on the policy which for years he had denounced. He was unable to make peace with Bonaparte. The mantle, however, of Mr. Pitt fell upon shoulders competent to wear it.

The Duke of Wellington's personality towered over that of the politicians who hampered, though they could not thwart, his dogged purpose and patient strategy.

After Waterloo, during the thirty years of peace that followed, the threads dropped

by Mr. Pitt were slowly gathered up. Partly Mr. Canning, his friend and disciple, partly Lord Grey, who "wrought in brave old age what youth had planned," partly Sir Robert Peel, yielding to reason based on Adam Smith's doctrines, managed to carry out the schemes dear to Mr. Pitt in the days when he was still free to contemplate, in a reforming spirit, domestic abuses.

The Liberal party, the outcome of his political conceptions and of the immortal writings of Edmund Burke, began to take advantage of the new system of government which had sprung from that elementary type, invented by the statesmen of Queen Anne and developed by the statesmen of the Georges.

The Press became a vast, far-reaching power, with wide-spreading influence over opinion and events. The control exercised by the popular voice over the executive government was fast becoming unquestioned. A young Sovereign, inexperienced but singularly reasonable, seemed determined to give fair play to the system of Cabinet Government initiated by Walpole, and since firmly

established. Aided by her marriage to a Prince, himself educated with consummate care, and endowed with rare capacity and great prudence, she was enabled to acquire statesmanlike qualities which have guided her Ministers, and the State over which she presides, through days perilous to monarchy and to constitutional government as established by English custom. So that while constitution-mongers in other lands have seen their projects defeated, and their pet schemes destroyed, by passing gusts of popular passion; here, in Britain, as the people acquired knowledge, and through knowledge power, democratic government has been grafted on to the old aristocratic stock, with unpremeditated but supreme sense; and the form of government has been moulded, by those primarily responsible, into a shape suitable to the growing requirements of the nation and to the wider needs of the Victorian Empire. This has been the work of the nineteenth century, which opened for England with the accession to power of Mr. Pitt in 1783, and with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789.

In 1885, when the agricultural classes were first admitted to the Franchise, the twentieth century may be said to have commenced. Possibly the work of the Liberal party, as known to us, is at an end. The teaching of Adam Smith and of Burke may have had its day. New conditions may require a reconsideration of principles both commercial and administrative, which our grandfathers believed to be essential and vital to every form of government Lord Beaconsfield's aphorism, *Sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas*, may possibly cover the new combinations and new ideas of the coming century; for he possessed the curious gift of prophecy peculiar to his race. Undoubtedly the social ferment is great at the present time. The patient labouring classes have become, under the influences of education, articulate and restless. They have obtained a share of political power, and they show signs of using it. Properly used, it should increase the sum of human happiness. The new wine will probably require new bottles. The break up of the Liberal party in 1886 may prove, in

spite of spasmodic revivals, to be as final as the fall of the Whigs in 1783. When new combinations come to be formed, and new principles applied to government, it will be interesting to note the fitness of the Cabinet and parliamentary system still in use for the new conditions of things. The constitutional customs of our fathers have hitherto proved so elastic, and the habits of Englishmen incline so happily to precedent and to long-established usage, that while we must expect new developments and necessary changes, we may confidently hope that the chain which binds the England of to-day to the England of our ancestors will remain unbroken.

APPENDIX

NOTE

1485 = Battle of Bosworth Field—End of Civil Wars.

Rule of the Tudors.

1588 = Spanish Armada—England freed from foreign interference.

Rule of the Stuarts.

1688 = Revolution—Religious and political liberty established.

Rule of the Whigs.

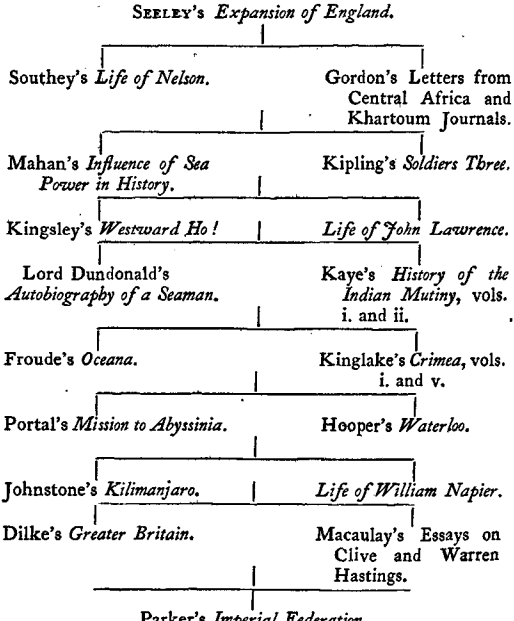
1784 = Mr. Pitt's Government — New ideas: Retrenchment; Reform; Free Trade.

Rule of the Liberal party.

1886 = Break-up of the Liberals. New combinations and ideas. Labour Problems.

Sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas.

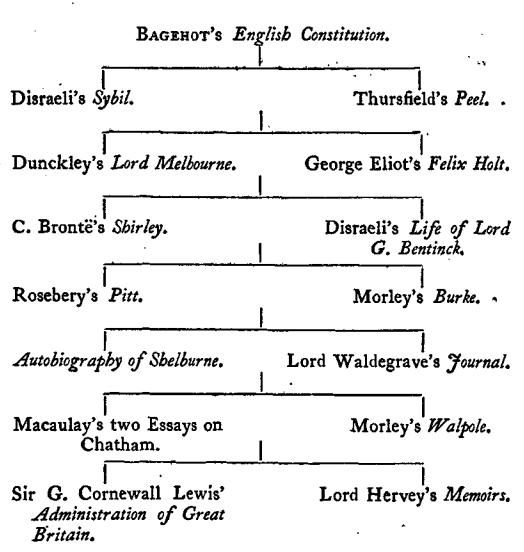
SCHEMES OF READING (No. 1).


Seeley's *Expansion of England.*
Southey's *Life of Nelson.*
Gordon's Letters from Central Africa and Khartoum Journals.
Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power in History.*
Kipling's *Soldiers Three.*
Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*
Life of John Lawrence.
Lord Dundonald's *Autobiography of a Seaman.*
Kaye's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, vols. i. and ii.
Froude's *Oceana.*
Kinglake's *Crimea*, vols. i. and v.
Portal's *Mission to Abyssinia.*
Hooper's *Waterloo.*
Johnstone's *Kilimanjaro.*
Life of William Napier.
Dilke's *Greater Britain.*
Macaulay's Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings.
Parker's *Imperial Federation.*

This scheme of reading is based on Professor Seeley's book as a *leit motif*, which may be said to run through the whole of it. The enterprise, courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice of Englishmen—qualities ennobling the race, and at the foundation of Empire—are discovered in these volumes. The suggestions may be thought fanciful and some of the books trivial; but I hold no book to be trivial which has moved men to tears or stirred a noble impulse.

The main difficulty has been to choose books which avoid much detail, and yet convey clearly the lesson which Professor Seeley has elevated into a principle.

SCHEMES OF READING (No. 2).



Here the *leit motif* is Mr. Bagehot's unique little book.

The novels by Disraeli, C. Brontë, and George Eliot contain true and invaluable pictures of England at important moments while the modern Constitution was making. It has been suggested to me on high authority that *Alton Locke* should be substituted for *Felix Holt*; but, after careful consideration, I adhere to George Eliot's novel.

Very interesting and important Memoirs have been omitted owing to their length, and to the amount of knowledge presupposed if they are to be altogether appreciated.

These two schemes do not aim at being exhaustive; but it is hoped that they may prove interesting to young readers.

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